

CONNECTING SERMONS TO THE REAL-LIFE CIRCUMSTANCES
OF THE LISTENERS:
TEACHING PREACHING TO STUDENT PASTORS

A THESIS-PROJECT
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To my wife Lois

My best friend, my inspiration, my encourager

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ABSTRACT

This study offers a mentoring model for intentionally teaching audience analysis to seminary students during their one-year internship (vicarage) in the Masters of Divinity program at Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, MO. An intern (vicar) was given instruction on incorporating various components of audience analysis into his sermon preparation. Evaluators from the congregation rated how effectively the vicar's sermons related to their real-life circumstances. The evaluators experienced improvement in the vicar's ability to connect his sermon to their lives. Intentional teaching in audience analysis as part of sermon preparation increases the preacher's ability to deliver the Word of God effectively. Supervisors of vicars should consider implementing intentional teaching in audience analysis as part of their mentoring regimen.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

The Problem

Preaching is a monumental task. The preacher stands between two worlds, the world of the text of Scripture, the very Word of God, and listeners, each one a unique individual gathered to hear what God wants to say to him or her. It is daunting to imagine seven billion people on this planet and no two of them the same. Add to that the complexities of twenty-first century western culture that is changing at breakneck speed, the advance of technology, and the radical shifts in longstanding philosophical underpinnings of epistemology, morality and social values. One of the many challenges of preaching is connecting God's Word to the real-life circumstances of the listeners. Were it not for the power and work of the Holy Spirit one might be tempted to give up before he or she even begins to preach.

As complex as the preaching task is, the job of teaching preaching seems even more daunting. The fundamentals of exegesis and basic structures are taught in introductory level homiletics courses in seminaries.¹ That is true for The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod (LC-MS)—which operates two residential seminaries, Concordia Seminary in St. Louis, MO, and Concordia Theological Seminary in Ft.

¹ Sidney Greidanus. "Teaching First-Year Preaching", (paper presented at the 3rd annual meeting of the Evangelical Homiletics Society, Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada, October 16-18, 2003), accessed September 29, 2016, http://ehomiletics.com/files/papers/ehs_papers_2003.pdf. Greidanus observes that students need to learn one or two basic sermon forms before they start launching out into a various creative forms. The analogy of a figure skater needing to learn compulsory figures before they are allowed to start doing freestyle made the point. A straight forward expository sermon model was Greidanus' starting point for his first year students. It gave students flexibility within a framework and also helped students give peer reviews and instructors to make consistent evaluations.

Wayne, IN.² Dr. David Schmitt, Dr. Glenn Nielsen, and Dr. Todd Jones of Concordia Seminary concur that the function of the first course in homiletics is to give students a starting point, a basic model upon which to build.³ In the second year of homiletics instruction at Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, opportunities are given for students to deal with unique genres such as parables and Old Testament narratives, as well as exploring additional sermon structures. Following the second year of classes most residential Masters of Divinity students at the two LC-MS seminaries are assigned to a twelve-month internship called “vicarage.” During vicarage, students are given the opportunity to take what they have learned in the classroom and use it in a real-time setting under the guidance of an experienced pastor, called, the vicarage supervisor. Students and faculty alike agree that the vicarage year is transformational in many ways, including the impact it has on learning to preach.⁴

The pedagogical method of classroom instruction combined with real-time experience over a twelve-month internship is sturdy and useful for producing competent preachers for our denomination. As a mentor the vicarage supervisor has the opportunity to make a significant difference in the student’s formation as a pastor. Vicarage supervisors are a critical element in the effective development of these new preachers. In the area of preaching, part of the struggle that supervisors face is helping the student

² My project is focused primarily on Concordia Seminary, St. Louis since all but one of the eighteen interns I have mentored has been assigned from that institution.

³ Appendix A. David Schmitt, Interview by author, St. Louis, MO, October 10, 2015. “Hom1 is your very basic course. It teaches you a method of sermon preparation. Not THE method, but A method to get you started. So you’re working on all aspects of the very basics of the general Sunday morning sermon. We teach three different forms in that course. You teach a text/application form, you teach a Law/Gospel sermon form, could be Lowry Loop, it could be four pages of the sermon by Wilson, and then you teach an expository form that follows either a verse by verse, or a thematic flow of the text. And that’s Hom1.”

⁴ Appendix B. Glenn Nielsen, Interview by author, St. Louis, MO, October 10, 2015. “First of all they are more confident, because they’ve done it. And then I get them in the fourth year class and I say, remember you’re just beginning. But in terms of having experience to draw upon when I teach that 4th year class now I’ve got some traction. In the Hom1 class they’re just learning how to do it. In the 4th year class I’ve got some traction and we can talk about things that begin to relate back to the vicarage.”

connect his preaching to the real-life experience of the listener. Three general observations can be made about this struggle. First, students are coming out of an intensive, two-year academic environment. Homiletics is only one of many courses in exegetical, systematic, historical, and practical theology. The student is packed full of true and interesting information about the Bible, the doctrine of the church, and the history of Christianity that he is often excited to share. Second, many of the vicars are young; having entered the seminary immediately after college, they have limited life experience. In addition, while the opportunity to preach during their first two years of seminary varies from student to student, most arrive on vicarage having preached a few sermons to their classmates and perhaps at their home congregation or as a pulpit supply preacher around the area of the seminary. Third, vicarage supervisors, while they have invaluable practical experience in preaching, the importance of which should not be diminished, do not typically have specific training in teaching preaching. The combination of these three factors can result in preaching that does not readily relate to the real-life experiences of listeners.

Therefore, the opportunity exists to enhance the outcome of the vicarage experience in the area of preaching by offering supervisors a methodology by which they can mentor their vicars to produce sermons that connect more effectively with the real-life experience of their listeners. Having described the struggle that vicarage supervisors face, I will now turn my focus to my specific ministry setting as a vicarage supervisor in the LC-MS.

Ministry Setting

St. Luke's Lutheran Church and School is 105 years old.⁵ The congregation is situated in central Florida. St. Luke's is a member of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod. The LC-MS is a biblically conservative, confessional, evangelical denomination dedicated to the Reformation principles of “grace alone, Scripture alone, faith alone.”⁶ As such, the denomination is committed to a rigorous and thorough training of her pastors.

St. Luke's is a large congregation with nearly four thousand baptized members. The average weekly worship attendance at six worship services is approximately 1,300. The church operates a day school for pre-school through eighth grade with an enrollment of 750 students. St. Luke's is situated next door to the Lutheran Haven, a ministry founded by members of the congregation that has developed into a retirement center with independent and assisted living, memory care and skilled nursing care facilities. The Oviedo community where St. Luke's is located is a rapidly growing, affluent suburb of Orlando, FL. The population is predominately Caucasian. The median age of the residents is thirty-five years.⁷ The combination of a retirement center and school ministry results in a diverse age range in the congregation. The median age of the congregation is only slightly higher than the surrounding community at thirty-eight years.

I have been the senior pastor of St. Luke's since 1999. We have approximately 135 full and part time staff working for the church and school. St. Luke's has participated in the vicarage program of the LC-MS seminary education for thirty-three years. I served

⁵ A pictorial history of St. Luke's was produced for its 100th anniversary and is available by contacting the church office at 2021 W. State Rd. 426, Oviedo, FL 32765 or emailing churchinfo@slcs.org.

⁶ The Lutheran Church Missouri Synod. “Belief and Practice,” accessed March 14, 2017, Lcms.org. <http://www.lcms.org/belief-and-practice>.

⁷ Advameg, Inc. “Oviedo, FL.” City-Data.com, accessed October 31, 2016, <http://www.city-data.com/city/Oviedo-Florida.html>.

my internship at St. Luke's in 1986. I am currently supervising my eighteenth vicar. The congregation is highly supportive of the vicarage program and enjoys being part of helping young men prepare for pastoral ministry. The range of opportunities for ministry at St. Luke's makes it an ideal location for vicars to obtain diverse ministry experience. Part of that experience is the opportunity to preach up to twenty-six times in weekend worship, school chapel, staff devotion time, and at various functions at the Lutheran Haven retirement center.

Importance of the Study

In a widely publicized report in 2015, the Pew Research Center revealed that the number of adults in the United States identifying themselves as Christian declined sharply between 2007 and 2014, while the number identifying themselves as having no religious affiliation, the “nones,” increased dramatically.⁸ The largest part of that decline occurred in mainline Protestant churches. The decline is more pronounced in younger generations with many coming into adulthood that have never had any religious affiliation. The age of cultural Christianity in America is passing. The social norm of “joining the church” and participating in religious activities such as worship attendance and daily prayer is changing. The opportunity to reach people with the gospel message of Jesus Christ is tremendous.

⁸ “America’s Changing Religious Landscape,” Pew Research Center, last modified May 12, 2015, accessed October 31, 2016, <http://www.pewforum.org/2015/05/12/americas-changing-religious-landscape/>. But the major new survey of more than 35,000 Americans by the Pew Research Center finds that the percentage of adults (ages 18 and older) who describe themselves as Christians has dropped by nearly eight percentage points in just seven years, from 78.4% in an equally massive Pew Research survey in 2007 to 70.6% in 2014. Over the same period, the percentage of Americans who are religiously unaffiliated – describing themselves as atheist, agnostic or “nothing in particular” – has jumped more than six points, from 16.1% to 22.8%. And the share of Americans who identify with non-Christian faiths also has inched up, rising 1.2 percentage points, from 4.7% in 2007 to 5.9% in 2014.

The President of the LC-MS, Dr. Matthew Harrison, in his opening address to the 66th Convention of The Lutheran Church Missouri Synod spoke candidly, “The Missouri Synod has been declining numerically for over 40 years.” In his address he announced, “Later this year we will be releasing detailed information about these studies which highlights the significance of preaching, outreach, outreach to immigrant populations, training laity in evangelism, and the retention of the baptized and confirmed.”⁹ The convention passed Resolution 17-03 “To Endorse ‘Preach the Word Project’ as Celebration of the 500th Anniversary of Reformation” by a vote of 854 to 55.¹⁰ The “Preach the Word Project” brings together leading homileticians in the LC-MS to develop a continuing education program for pastors already serving in congregations. In the promotional video, President Harrison states, “We put together the ‘Preach the Word’ project to help our pastors work together to improve our preaching of the gospel across the board.”¹¹ The goal of the “Preach the Word Project” is to bring together “triads” of like-minded, supportive pastors to receive instruction through video modules and engage in conversation about their preaching, identify areas of growth to be implemented in their congregations, and then come back together for evaluation and feedback. The LC-MS regards the preaching task as critical to the life and health of God’s people and the

⁹ Rev. Dr. Matthew Harrison, “President’s Report: Part 3. 2016. Convention Proceedings, 66th Convention of The Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod Final Proceedings,” The Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod, last modified October 7, 2016, accessed October 31, 2016, <http://www.lcms.org/convention>.

¹⁰ Raymond L. Hartwig, “Committee 17: Preaching and Church Worker Continuing Education, Convention Minutes. 66th Convention of The Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod. Session 8.. Minutes: July 9-14. 30,” The Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod, last modified October 7, 2016, accessed October 31, 2016, <http://www.lcms.org/convention>.

¹¹ “Harrison Highlights Synod ‘Preach the Word’ Effort,” TheLCMS, accessed October 31, 2016, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HpFWZEIxs8&list=PLDu0iVoFL_d7oL3uMTofXvscyI0Wd0GTX&index=5.

viability of the denomination. The “Preach the Word Project” is one example of our efforts to improve the preaching of those already in the field.

Following the drive to improve preaching the purpose of this thesis-project is to examine how the twelve-month internship, called “vicarage,” can be enhanced to develop the preaching skills of new pastors. Equipping vicarage supervisors to help their students connect to the real-life circumstances of the listeners will enable the student, through his preaching, to strengthen the faithful in a rapidly changing world and to reach the growing population of those who have not heard the saving message of God’s love for them in Jesus Christ. The value of the vicarage program in the area of preaching is evident in two ways.

First, the importance of the vicarage program in the training of future preachers is attested to by the goals of the program. The manual for vicarage, “The Vicar in the Church” states: “The vicarage is a vital part of the seminary’s M. Div. Program, and the chief purpose of the vicarage is to further the formation of the student leading to certification for the pastoral office in The Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod.” In the section entitled “Preaching” the following rubrics are outlined:

In the area of preaching the supervising pastor can benefit the vicar in the following ways:

1. He should provide ample opportunity for the vicar to enjoy the privilege of being God's voice to God's people. While frequency of preaching may vary among vicars depending upon individual abilities, preaching once a month in Sunday morning worship services ought to be considered the minimum and the maximum in most instances would be three times per month on Sunday morning.
2. He should provide guidance for maintaining and developing good techniques of sermon preparation. The purpose of the in-service training will be realized best when the supervising pastor guides the vicar or joins the vicar in careful and prayerful study of the text, preferably in the original language.

3. Since the supervising pastor is the shepherd of the flock, he is responsible for the application of the Word to the congregation. Thus, he should assist the vicar by suggesting various positive applications of God's Word to the activities and situations of the members of the congregation.
4. As supervising pastor, he is accountable for the content of the sermons of the vicar. In reviewing each sermon, he can watch for pitfalls of generalization and moralizing, and he can determine whether or not the sermon is textual and Christo-centric. Also, he should help the vicar see the importance of having the sermon answer clearly, for both children and adults, these questions: *“Does the sinner see his sin?” (Law, condemnation); “Does the sinner see his Savior?” (Gospel, justification); “Does the saved sinner, on the basis of the text, trust God's power in Christ and see the specific area of service to God and man in which he is to be active?” (Law and Gospel, sanctification).*
5. He should counsel and encourage the vicar to develop good altar and pulpit habits, including the use of voice and gestures.¹²

Second, the impact of the vicarage program is attested by the experience of students, supervisors, and seminary faculty. In panel discussions I conducted at the annual vicarage supervisor's conference, one student summarized the response of the panel of three students. He commented that all of the experiences were formative, from visiting homebound members, to teaching confirmation and Bible study, and then added, “Preaching, I would say, was the most formative over all.”¹³ Dr. David Schmitt, professor of Homiletics at Concordia Seminary, was asked, “How much change do you see in a student's preaching post-internship?” He replied, “It's amazing. It is amazing. I would gladly teach a fourth-year class instead of first or second year class because the act of preaching in context changes the questions they ask, changes the ways in which they value certain activities of learning. It's just amazing. So the practice of doing it

¹² Vicarage Handbook. A copy of the manual is available from the Vicarage Office at Concordia Seminary via this e-mail: vicarage@csl.edu.

¹³ Appendix D. Fourth-year student panel discussion, Interview by author.

[preaching] really changes them.”¹⁴ One of the supervisors in the panel discussion is pastor of a congregation that has been training vicars for nearly fifty years. Not only did he place a high value on the vicarage experience, he also said of his congregation, “they identify themselves as a vicarage congregation.”¹⁵ To that I would add my own experience as a vicarage supervisor. The one-on-one mentoring during that year of internship is invaluable. In the eighteen years I have served as a vicarage supervisor, the feedback from students on the value of their experience has been overwhelmingly positive.

However, areas of growth exist that may enhance the vicarage experience in developing future preachers for the LC-MS. The three supervisors in the panel discussion at the annual vicarage supervisor’s conference all acknowledged that their personal experience in the area of preaching, when they did their vicarages, was essentially non-directive. When asked, “What did you experience on vicarage with your vicarage supervisor with regard to preaching?” two of the three members of the panel reported to the effect, “I would hand in my manuscript and then get spelling and grammar fixes.”¹⁶ To that I add my own experience on vicarage. My supervisor typically wrote, “Looks good,” at the top of my manuscript. That was all.

My research revealed that the level of interaction between the student and supervisor has improved from the experience of the pastors in the panel discussion. The students I interviewed in the panel discussion were not vicars for the three pastors I interviewed. In other words, the three students represented three experiences with supervisors unique from the three pastors I interviewed. When the students were asked,

¹⁴ Appendix A. David Schmitt, Interview by author.

¹⁵ Appendix E. Vicarage supervisor panel discussion, Interview by author.

¹⁶ Appendix E. Vicarage supervisor panel discussion, Interview by author.

“Is there one thing your supervisor could have done more of that would have been helpful to you in your preaching?” one student responded, “It’s not that we didn’t do it but I think if we had a more regular meeting time to study the Scripture readings for that day . . . rather than talking with him about it post writing or post preaching of the sermon.” Another student responded, “We had meetings before the manuscript and after delivery, but basically throughout the whole process he was very open and free and I just talked to him and that was very helpful communication on his part.”¹⁷ The experience of these students underscores the importance of the supervisor setting aside time to understand the unique style of the individual vicar and provide support through this critical time of formation as a preacher.

Having spoken to the importance of this study and the strength of the vicarage program in the training of preachers, I will now identify the problem of equipping future pastors during their twelve-month internship in the area of preaching. It is beyond the scope of this project to assess all aspects of the preaching task. Therefore, I will narrow the focus of this project to the area of helping vicars do audience analysis in order to improve their effectiveness in connecting God’s Word to the real-life circumstances of their listeners.

Identification of the Problem

Goal number three under the subject of preaching in the vicarage handbook, noted above, identifies the importance of the supervising pastor in the role of equipping vicars for “various positive applications of God’s Word to the activities and situations of the

¹⁷ Appendix D. Fourth-year student panel discussion, Interview by author.

members of the congregation.”¹⁸ In this section I will identify the problem supervisors encounter in helping vicars connect their preaching to the real-life circumstances of the listeners. The evidence is from three sources: first, my own experience in supervising vicars the past eighteen years; second, data collected in a survey of vicarage supervisors; and third, responses from panel discussion interviews with supervisors and fourth-year seminary students who had completed their vicarage.

First, my own experience in supervising vicars over the past eighteen years is that getting a new preacher to connect with the real-life circumstances of the listeners is a common problem. I see several possible reasons. One reason is that of the eighteen men I have supervised, fifteen were in their early to mid twenties. The standard route to ordination in the LC-MS is a bachelor’s degree followed by four years of seminary to earn a Masters of Divinity. A typical student coming on vicarage is twenty-four or twenty-five years old. The majority of the vicars I have supervised were married but, of course, at that age, only for a few years at most. Therefore, many students come on their internship with limited life experience. They have not faced in a sustained way, the challenges of the work environment, either blue collar or white collar. They are only beginning to experience the challenges of marriage and parenting. I do not want to diminish in anyway their own childhood experiences or college life but simply recognize that they have not had many first-hand experiences with the variety of real-life circumstances of the listeners.

Another possible reason from my experience as a supervisor for new preachers struggling to connect with the listeners’ real-life circumstances is that all vicars are

¹⁸ Vicarage Handbook.

coming on their internship from an intensive two-year academic setting. The vicar's mindset has been focused on acquiring knowledge in exegetical, systematic, historical, and practical theology. The seminaries do an excellent job of providing fieldwork experience during the first two years of the program but those experiences are still set in an academic context of completing requirements for graduation. All students face the challenge of translating what they learned in the classroom into the vernacular of the people in the pew. One task of vicarage is to help the student put the academic tools they have acquired at seminary to practical use in the lives of the listeners.

A final reason from my experience as a supervisor that new preachers struggle to connect with the listeners' real-life experiences is that, as noted above, classroom homiletics instruction is intended to provide basic tools and structure for practicing the art of preaching. A student is correctly focused when he arrives on vicarage on properly exegeting the biblical text and preparing a well-written manuscript that his supervisor will approve. Occasionally, a student will arrive on vicarage having preached a dozen times, but most have preached only two or three times in a congregational setting, plus the times to their peers in a classroom setting. The twelve-month vicarage will be the first time the student has the opportunity to know his listeners more intimately over an extended period of time and craft his sermons to speak to their real-life circumstances.

A second source that identifies the problem this project addresses is the data from a survey given to vicarage supervisors that reveals that the vast majority of supervisors do engage students in basic audience analysis. 95% of the respondents said that they "usually" or "always" familiarize the student with the history of the congregation. 89% "usually" or "always" discuss the demographics of the community where the

congregation is located. When asked to respond to the statement, “I usually engage the vicar in some audience analysis as part of his sermon preparation (i.e. help him think about specific age groups, socio-economic status, or life circumstances in the congregation)” only 8.7% responded “never” or “seldom,” 4.3% responded “sometimes,” and 89.1% responded, “usually” or “always.” From these results it is clear that vicarage supervisors understand the importance of audience analysis and do some form of mentoring to equip students in using audience analysis information in their sermon preparation.¹⁹

The panel-discussion interviews I conducted with vicarage supervisors and fourth-year seminarians returning from their vicarage reveal some of the struggles and successes experienced by the supervisors in helping students connect more effectively to the real-life circumstances of the listeners. In response to a question regarding the student’s ability to exegete a biblical text, one of the supervisors said, “The seminaries are very good at teaching them exegesis. So when it comes to explication of what the text means, what’s happening there [in the text], there’s never any problem. It’s the application that they grow and mature in as they relate it to the life of the person in the pew.”²⁰ Another supervisor concurred, using the phrase “they keep the text at kind of an arm’s distance away from them” and described the tendency to speak abstractly about the text.²¹ In another question about requiring vicars to write a complete manuscript one supervisor said,

Well I do make my seminary vicars write every word out of their sermon. I don’t ask them to memorize their manuscript. They have to memorize the idea, the skeleton, the basics. And then on every sermon . . . I write in giant red letters, So

¹⁹ Appendix G. Vicarage supervisor survey results.

²⁰ Appendix E. Vicarage supervisors panel discussion, Interview by author.

²¹ Appendix E. Vicarage supervisors panel discussion, Interview by author.

What? – with a giant question mark. Because they’re really good at explaining the text and the exegesis about the whole thing, but now, I’ve got a farmer here whose tractor broke down – so what?! So what?! If you can answer that question in the sermon then you’re connecting with the people. If you’re not answering it then they’re going to leave with their heads swimming that you just explained this Greek word six times and they still don’t know what that means about their life or their difficulties.²²

In my panel-discussion interviews with fourth-year seminarians recently returned from their vicarages, I asked students to describe the sermon preparation process that they followed for their first sermon at their vicarage congregation. All three of my interviewees described their exegetical process, including study of the original languages and consulting of commentaries. They further described their methods of arranging their ideas and structuring their sermon. They explained their system of practicing for the delivery. What was lacking was any intentional process of analyzing the needs of the listeners. Awareness of the listeners appeared to be something that happened more instinctively over the course of the internship rather than an intentional part of their preparation. One student commented, “I got a better understanding of the congregation toward the end after being there for a year, obviously, [I started asking] where were people in the congregation going to be approaching that text?”²³ Another commented that the way his supervisor helped him was reviewing his manuscript and pointing out where “I maybe use too many examples, or I use good examples for myself, but specifically for the congregation there were better things.” These interviews were conducted at the annual vicarage supervisor’s conference with thirty supervisors in attendance. At the end of the panel discussion the audience of vicarage supervisors was given the opportunity to ask questions. One supervisor asked whether the students felt, by the end of vicarage, that

²² Appendix E. Vicarage supervisors panel discussion, Interview by author.

²³ Appendix D. Fourth-year student panel discussion, Interview by author.

they were actually preaching to the issues and to the people in the pew, relating the text to them versus just telling them what the text said? One of the students responded:

Definitely toward the end, at least in my experience – maybe midway it started becoming more of – instead of me preaching strictly what was in the text and trying to relate it – I got to know the people - we had a pre-service, like 15 minute greeting time and I would go out and shake hands and I got to know people and they'd come ask me questions and through Bible study – I got a feel for what people were struggling with and the community, what was going on in the community. And that really helped with the latter half of my vicarage to be more effective in delivering what communicated with them.²⁴

Project Thesis

The twelve-month internship is a powerful tool in the development of new preachers in the LC-MS seminary training. The value of the vicarage program for equipping new preachers is well attested by students, seminary faculty, and vicarage supervisors. While the effectiveness of a sermon in the life of a listener is a work of the Holy Spirit, preaching that connects the Word of God to the real-life circumstances of the listener sharpens the sword of the Spirit for his use in their lives. It is my thesis that intentional mentoring by a vicarage supervisor in the area of audience analysis will enhance the student's ability to connect his preaching to the real-life circumstances of the listener.

Therefore, I am interested to know what methods of mentoring and types of learning activities will help a student intern grow in his understanding of his listeners in order to enhance his ability to identify with their real-life circumstances. My research question is: how can supervisors effectively mentor students in audience analysis during their twelve-month internship so the students better impact the listeners' real-life

²⁴ Appendix D. Fourth-year student panel discussion, Interview by author.

circumstances with the proclamation of God's Word. This thesis-project proposes that as a vicar is mentored in audience analysis listeners will experience a greater sense of the connection of God's Word to their life. The research question requires, first, that I become familiar with the subject of audience analysis in the broad sense as it applies to public speaking and in a narrower sense as it applies to the preaching of God's Word; and second, that I investigate best practices of mentoring adult learners.

To defend my thesis, in Chapter 2, I will examine the theological basis for connecting God's Word to the real-life circumstances of his people through preaching. I will support my thesis in Chapter 2 by examining the purpose of God's Word and the use of preaching in the Old and New Testament to impact the lives of his people. Therefore, I will study the following areas: the doctrine of inspiration and the doctrine of preaching as one of the means by which the Holy Spirit works in the lives of people.

In Chapter 3, I will review pertinent literature on the role of audience analysis in public speaking, especially as it applies to the specific form of public speaking called preaching. In addition I will survey best practices in teaching adult learners, particularly as it applies to teaching homiletics.

In Chapter 4, I will explain the design of this thesis-project. A description of the mentoring process in the area of audience analysis with learning objectives and a method to track perceived connectedness in the lives of the listeners will be presented.

Finally in Chapter 5, the results of the mentoring process will be examined by analyzing the data on perceived connectedness from the listeners. From these results I will recommend ways a vicarage supervisor can enhance his mentoring in the area of

audience analysis. I will also reflect on some further study that could strengthen the vicarage program in the area of preaching.

CHAPTER TWO

THEOLOGICAL FRAMEWORK

The purpose of this chapter is to examine the theological framework upon which this thesis-project is built. My thesis-project assumes that preaching is intended by God to accomplish something in the life of the listener, namely to proclaim Jesus Christ, by which the Holy Spirit works to restore listeners to the fullness of their humanity by forgiving their sins and raising them to new life, a work never completed until Jesus comes again in glory to make all things new. How can preaching do such great things? The writer of Hebrews asserts, “The Word of God is living and active” (Heb. 4:12). The Word of God is not merely information about God, but it seeks to accomplish what God says in the lives of those who hear it. So, St. Paul wrote to Timothy, “Preach the Word” (2 Tim 4:2).¹ God has chosen preaching as one of the means by which he brings His living and active Word to bear on people. I will examine two areas of doctrine. The first is the doctrine of Scripture as the dynamic Word of God, which has the power to do what it says, namely, to accomplish God’s work of rescuing us from sin, death, and eternal separation from Him and work new life in us. The second is the doctrine of preaching. Specifically I will examine how this living and active nature of the Word works in preaching as a means which the Holy Spirit uses to create and sustain faith, and to lead and strengthen people in their Christian life of obedience that comes from faith. In Chapter 1 I proposed that audience analysis would aid the preacher in connecting this powerful Word of God to the real-life circumstances of the listener. Exploring the doctrines of the Word and preaching provides the necessary framework for the preacher

¹ Unless otherwise noted, all Scripture quotation are from the *English Standard Version* of the Bible (Wheaton, Standard Bible Society, 2016).

to properly understand the role of audience analysis in the development of his or her sermon.

The Scripture as the Living and Active Word of God

The Scripture is the Word of God. By that I mean God guided the human authors of the Bible so that what they wrote is exactly what God's human creatures need to know and believe in order to be rescued from sin, death, and eternal separation for him. 2 Timothy 3:16-17 is a foundational verse for this understanding: "All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work." This thesis-project is built on the understanding that the Scripture is the inerrant, inspired Word of God and the only source and norm of all that we believe, preach, teach, and confess.

The assertion that the Scripture is the inerrant and inspired Word of God has been the subject of much debate since the time of the Enlightenment. The new age of rationalism that ensued subjected the Scriptures to a critical analysis that insisted the Bible be treated like any other ancient document. A new breed of critical theologians rejected the traditional belief that the Scriptures are the Word of God. In the battle to maintain the understanding of the Bible as the Word of God traditional theologians tied inerrancy to the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. This move resulted in making the Christian faith dependent upon the inspiration and inerrancy of every word as an *a priori* foundation upon which Christianity either stands or falls. In effect what can happen is that Jesus' life, death, and resurrection becomes dependent on proving that the Bible is inerrant and inspired rather than believing that the Bible is inerrant and inspired because

it reveals the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus as God's work for our salvation.

Quoting Alister McGrath, Peter Nafzger points to a fresh look at understanding the Bible as reliable and true: "In the recent past, we have been overwhelmed by the force of a rhetoric that has sought to persuade us that there are no other options than an obscurantist fundamentalism and a culturally and intellectually sophisticated liberalism."² What follows is a theology of the Scripture that focuses on the nature and function of the Scripture in God's plan of salvation rooted in the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus.

The Theology of Scripture as the Living and Active Word of God

This understanding of the Bible explores what the Scriptures are (i.e. the Word of God) based on what the Scriptures do. Peter Nafzger in *These Words are Written* develops a theology of Scripture that is useful for my thesis-project.³ His work develops the relationship between the spoken, the personal, and the written Word of God. Nafzger writes,

The biblical narrative revolves around the Word of God. It is God's primary means for communicating and accomplishing his will. Through his creative Word he brings all things into existence; through his spoken and written Word he establishes and maintains relationships with his human creatures; and through his incarnate, crucified and resurrected Word he accomplishes salvation for his fallen creation.

I will summarize this movement from spoken, to personal, to written word as the foundation of my understanding of the use of God's written Word, the Scriptures, in preaching.

² Peter Nafzger, *These Words are Written* (Eugene: Pickwick Publications, 2013), 33.

³ Nafzger, 33.

The Spoken Word of God

The first step in understanding the use of the Bible in preaching is the fact that from the beginning God reveals himself as a speaking God. God chooses to speak to his human creatures primarily through individuals he has chosen and given the words he wishes to speak. The Old Testament prophets are a clear example. The prophets are God's hand picked ambassadors who are given the authority to speak on his behalf. The refrain, "The Word of the LORD came to," is repeated in Hosea, Joel, Jonah, Micah, Zephaniah, Haggai, and Zechariah. Jeremiah says, "Then the Lord put out his hand and touched my mouth. And the Lord said to me, 'Behold, I have put my words in your mouth'" (Jer 1:9). God speaks words to his human creatures through his human creatures. Nafzger summarizes, "Speaking is not incidental to God, as if it were just one more thing that he does. Rather, speech is central to who God is and how he relates to his creation."⁴

The Power of God's Spoken Word

The second step in understanding the use of the Bible in preaching is to realize that not only has God chosen to reveal himself to us through words, but his words have power. Genesis 1:1 opens the written Word of God, "In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth." Each day of the creation begins with the words, "And God said, . . ." God speaks His Word and what He says happens. Throughout the Old Testament God establishes his relationship with his human creatures through his Word. God's spoken Word is powerful and it accomplishes his will (cf. Is 55:10-11). So the writer of Hebrews can say, "The word of God is living and active, sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing to the division of soul and of spirit, of joints and of marrow, and discerning the

⁴ Nafzger, 67.

thoughts and intentions of the heart” (Heb 4:11). We quickly discover the two-edged nature of the power of God’s spoken Word. God’s spoken Word has the power to create and destroy, to give life and to take it away. Thus Luther could say in his preface to the Old Testament:

I beg and really caution every pious Christian not to be offended by the simplicity of the language and stories frequently encountered there, but fully realize that, however simple they may seem, these are the very words, works, judgments, and deeds of the majesty, power, and wisdom of the most high God.⁵

The Word Made Flesh in Jesus: The Personal Word of God

The third step in understanding the use of the Bible in preaching is to acknowledge that the final and ultimate expression of God’s powerful Word occurred when “the Word became flesh and dwelt among us” (Jn 1:14). In the New Testament we discover the heart of our understanding of the Word of God. “Long ago, at many times and in many ways, God spoke to our fathers by the prophets, but in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son, whom he appointed the heir of all things, through whom also he created the world” (Heb 1:1-2). The Apostle John begins his account of the life of Jesus saying, “The Word was with God, and the Word was God . . . and the Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us” (Jn 1:1, 14). Jesus Christ is the Word of God enfleshed and made visible, made personal for all to see. Paul writes in Colossians 1 that Jesus is the “image of the invisible God” for whom and through whom “all things were created” and in whom the “fullness of God was pleased to dwell” (Col 1:16-19). Because of the centrality of this step I will examine three aspects of Jesus as the Word made flesh.

⁵ Martin Luther, *Luther’s Works*, ed. J. J. Pelikan, H. C. Oswald, and H. T. Lehmann (Philadelphia: Muhlenberg and Fortress Press, St Louis: Concordia, 1955-), 35-236.

The first aspect of Jesus as the Word made flesh is that it is rooted in the work of the Trinity for our salvation, thus as the Word made flesh, Jesus was sent by the Father. In John 14 Jesus said to his disciples, “The words that I say to you I do not speak on my own authority, but the Father who dwells in me does his works” (Jn 14:10); and “the word that you hear is not mine but the Father’s who sent me” (Jn 14:24). In the Old Testament the prophets authenticated their speech by saying, “thus says the Lord.” However when Jesus speaks he says, “Truly, truly I say to you . . .” (cf. Jn 5:24; 6:47; 8:51; 14:12). Matthew reports that the crowds were astonished by Jesus teaching because he spoke “as one who had authority” (Matt 7:28). As the personal Word of God Jesus is the final and ultimate prophet sent by the Father to accomplish all that God wills through his speaking and acting.

Furthermore, Jesus as the personal Word of God, is not only sent by the Father but is sent in the power of the Holy Spirit. From the beginning the biblical narrative pictures the Spirit (*ruah*) of God hovering over the waters (Gen 1:2) as the Father speaks the Word of creation. At the creation of man God “breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and the man became a living creature” (Gen 2:7). Connected to each other God’s Word and his Spirit give God’s human creatures life. God’s Word and his Spirit are inseparably linked throughout the Old Testament (Num 11:17; 2 Sam 23:2; Zech 7:12). The connection between the Word and the Spirit is evident in the conception and birth of Jesus. The angel Gabriel speaks the Word of God to Mary and she conceives the infant who is “Immanuel, which means God with us” (Matt 1:23). At Jesus’ baptism the Spirit anoints Jesus to begin his public ministry for us (Matt 3:16; Mk 1:10; Lk 3:22). At his baptism and his transfiguration the Father speaks directly from heaven, “This is my

beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased” (Matt 3:13-17; Mk 1:9-11). The Spirit leads Jesus into the wilderness where he confronts Satan (Matt 4:1; Mk 1:12; Lk 4:1). In Luke 4 Jesus reads from the prophet Isaiah, “The Spirit of the Lord is upon me,” and after the reading declares, “Today this Scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing” (Lk 4:17-21). In John 6 Jesus declares, “The words that I have spoken to you are spirit and life” (Jn 6:63). At the raising of Lazarus Jesus gives life by speaking, “Lazarus, come out!” (Jn 11:43). Jesus forgives sins (Matt 9:2). Jesus performs miraculous signs in the Spirit’s power (Matt 12:28). He casts out demons by speaking (Matt 8:16). As the Word made flesh Jesus is the enactment of the Trinity’s plan for our salvation.

The second aspect of Jesus as the Word made flesh is the necessity of his suffering and death to save all people. Jesus came not only for the few who witnessed his forgiving, healing, and restoring of life. He came to save all people. John the Baptist declared, “Behold, the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world” (Jn 1:29). The mission of Jesus, the personal Word of God, in the power of the Spirit was completed when he laid down his life for the sin of the world on the cross. Jesus glorifies the Father on the cross and is “declared to be the Son of God in power according to the Spirit of holiness by his resurrection from the dead” (Rom 1:4). The suffering, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ, who is the personal Word of God in the flesh, is the central point of the entire Scripture. Thus Bryan Chapell is correct when he says

The entire Bible is Christ-centered because his redemptive work in all of its incarnational, atoning, rising, interceding, and reigning dimensions is the capstone of all of God’s revelation of his dealings with people. Thus, no aspect of revelation can be thoroughly understood or explained in isolation from some aspect of Christ’s redeeming work.⁶

⁶ Bryan Chapell, *Christ-Centered Preaching: Redeeming the Expository Sermon*, 2nd ed. (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2005), 276.

The necessity of Jesus' death and resurrection is embedded in the understanding of God as one who speaks. Throughout the Old Testament the pattern is repeated. God speaks a word of command, God's human creatures disobey, and God speaks a word of judgment on them for their sin. Beginning in Genesis 2-3 with the fall and continuing through the prophets we see the deadly pattern unfold. Jesus followed the same pattern in his public ministry (cf. Matt 5:18-22). So, Jesus' judgment of the religious leaders as some of the worst offenders of God's commands (Matt 23:2-3) contributed to their desire to kill him, but ultimately they decided Jesus had to die because he spoke words of forgiveness. Jesus' claim to have the authority to forgive sins was tantamount to claiming to be God (cf. Mk 2:5-7). Jesus' claim to be one with the Father with the authority to forgive sins and grant eternal life led the religious leaders to demand his crucifixion (cf. Jn 8:58).

The integrity of a true prophet resides in the words he speaks coming to pass (Deut 18:21-22). The test of Jesus' authority to claim to be one with the Father, to perform miraculous deeds and forgive sins was tested after he died on the cross. All four gospel writers report that Jesus told his disciples repeatedly that we would rise again. (cf. Mk 8:31; Matt 16:21-28; Lk 9:22-27). John adds that in response to the Jews' call for a sign to confirm his authority Jesus said, "Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up" (Jn 2:19). After he rose "his disciples remembered that he had said this, and they believed the Scripture and the word that Jesus had spoken" (Jn 2:22). If Jesus had remained in the tomb he would have been proven a false prophet. Everything Jesus said and did hinges on the resurrection. Paul recognized this in 1 Corinthians 15 when he writes, "If Christ has not been raised, your faith is futile and you are still in your sins" (1

Cor 15:17). “But in fact Christ has been raised from the dead” (1 Cor 15:20). Jesus’ resurrection, therefore, is the proof that his ministry and message are true. As Gustav Wingren writes, “Had Christ not risen there would have been no risen Lord to send these preachers forth, no Spirit would have been given, and life bestowed in the Word.”⁷

The third aspect of Jesus as the Word made flesh is the commissioning of the apostles to preach the good news of his death and resurrection to the ends of the earth (Matt 28:18-20; Acts 1:8). After the resurrection Jesus sent the disciples to speak His words to the world. They were to call people to repentance for failing to obey God’s commands and offer forgiveness, life, and salvation to those who believed in Jesus (cf. Lk 24:44-49). The apostles are given the Holy Spirit to speak Jesus’ word with his authority. David Lotz writes, “God’s speaking and acting in Christ would remain *meaningless and ineffectual* without the oral witness to the Word made flesh, namely the apostolic preaching or publishing of Christ to the world, the gospel or ‘good news’ of Christ as ‘God for us.’”⁸ And when they began to preach the resurrection itself becomes the heart of the proclamation of the gospel by which God accomplishes his work of our salvation. From beginning to end in the book of Acts it is the resurrection that the Apostles proclaim to their listeners (cf. Acts 2:24; 13:23-30). When the Apostles wanted to have something happen in people’s lives they proclaimed the resurrection. The resurrected Christ sends the Spirit who empowers their message. Through the apostles God’s Word of repentance and forgiveness in the name of Jesus was given to all nations.

⁷ Gustav Wingren, *The Living Word* (Philadelphia: Mulenberg, 1960), 123-24.

⁸ David Lotz, “The Proclamation of the Word in Luther’s Thought.” *Word and World* 3 (1983): 346. (His emphasis).

The Written Word Of God

The final step in understanding the use of the Bible in preaching is the move from the spoken and personal Word of God to the written Word of God. This thesis-project is based on the understanding that the written Word of God is the proclamation of the prophets and the apostles concerning Jesus, the personal Word of God, set down for us in writing. The words of prophets and the apostles, written down, are the standard by which all subsequent preaching of the Word of God is measured. Paul indicates as much when he says that the church is “built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus himself being the cornerstone” (Eph 2:20). Peter Nafzger summarizes this understanding of the written Word of God upon which our preaching depends:

While there are many ways in which this threefold Word of God might be summarized, at its most basic it could be said that the Word of God saves. The personal Word was sent by the Father in the Spirit to save the world through his life, death, resurrection, and return (1 John 4:14); the spoken Word has the power of salvation as it gives the Spirit, forgiveness, and salvation to those who believe (Rom 1:16); the written Word is the prophetic and apostolic proclamation put down into writing so that we might believe that Jesus is the Christ and have life in his name (John 20:31). This written Word is profitable for salvation and useful for teaching and correcting, and in these terms it is described as *theopneustos* (2 Tim 3:16). In whatever form it appears, the Word of God accomplishes the saving will of the Father in the power of the Holy Spirit.⁹

Having explored the doctrine of Scripture as the dynamic Word of God, which has the power to do what it says, namely, to accomplish God’s work of rescuing us from sin, death, and eternal separation from Him and work new life in us, I will now turn my attention to how this living and active nature of the Word works in preaching as a means which the Holy Spirit uses to create and sustain faith and to lead and strengthen people in their Christian life of obedience that comes from faith.

⁹ Nafzger, 100.

The Proclamation of God's Word

The Lutheran Reformation is rooted in the conviction that the Holy Spirit working through the Scripture brings us to faith in God's grace revealed in the life, death, resurrection, ascension, and coming again of our Lord, Jesus Christ. At the Diet of Worms, April 1521, Luther sounded the trumpet call for allegiance to Scripture as the only source and norm for Christian teaching and faith,

Unless I am convinced by the testimony of the Scriptures or by clear reason (for I do not trust either in the pope or in councils alone, since it is well known that they have often erred and contradicted themselves), *I am bound by the Scriptures* I have quoted and my conscience is captive to the Word of God. I cannot and I will not retract anything, since it is neither safe nor right to go against conscience. God help me.¹⁰

The battle cry of the Reformation that people are saved by God's grace alone, through faith alone and that this is revealed through the Scripture alone spread rapidly in the medieval world in large part due to Luther's preaching. As Von Loewenich observes, "Luther was one of the greatest preachers in the history of Christendom. In quantitative terms alone, his preaching output was astounding. Between 1510-1546 Luther preached approximately 3000 sermons. Frequently he preached several times a day."¹¹ Having grown up in a culture where God's power was released into a person's life by the performance of ritual actions Luther came to insist that it was the hearing of God's Word that evoked faith in the hearer. It was the Reformation and particularly the tenaciousness of Luther that rediscovered the Word as humanity's greatest need.

Luther believed that it was the preaching of Christ crucified and resurrected that yielded repentance, faith, and a changed life that was lived out in one's calling in the

¹⁰ Luther, *Luther's Works*, 32-112. (emphasis mine).

¹¹ Walther Von Loewenich, *Martin Luther: The Man and his Work* (Minneapolis: Augsburg Publishing, 1986), 353.

world.¹² He insisted that the Spirit worked through preaching as a means of bringing people to saving faith in Christ. He was convinced that God spoke through sermons that were faithful to the Scripture in proclaiming law and gospel. By maintaining an essential unity between the text of Scripture and the sermon he believed that the Holy Spirit was present to be received by the hearer. Thus, Luther could say in one of his sermons on the Gospel of John: “Who is speaking? The pastor? By no means! You do not hear the pastor. Of course, the voice is his, but the words he employs are really spoken by my God.”¹³

Luther’s theology of the Word is foundational to my thesis-project. Through preaching God connects his living and powerful Word to the lives of listeners. Luther’s understanding of the Word is multi-faceted. Several key ideas give a glimpse of the depth of his understanding. First and foremost Luther understood God himself to be a speaking God, and his speech reveals Christ. Thus, Luther could say the whole Bible is about Jesus. The Old Testament is “the swaddling clothes and the manger in which Christ lies.”¹⁴ The New Testament delivers the Savior into the world for the church to proclaim. Luther called the church God’s “mouth-house” with the mission to proclaim the Gospel.¹⁵ Preaching brings the power of God’s written Word to the ears of the listeners so that, in a sense, Christians live by their ears, not by their eyes as they hear the good news that in Jesus Christ, God is “for us.”¹⁶

¹² John Pless, *Encyclopedia of Martin Luther and the Reformation*, “Luther’s Theology of Preaching,” (Lanham: Rowan and Littlefield, 2017). I received a pre-publication copy of this article from the author. The completed encyclopedia will be available August 2017.

¹³ Luther, *Luther’s Works*, 22-528.

¹⁴ Luther, *Luther’s Works*, 35-236.

¹⁵ Luther, *Luther’s Works*, 35-xi.

¹⁶ Nafzger, 161.

The Lutheran Confessions

Luther's conviction of the power of the Word and its effective delivery through preaching was formalized and preserved in the Lutheran Confessions. The Book of Concord contains the Lutheran Confessions developed by the reformers in the years following the Diet of Worms. They are accepted by The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod as the definitive statement of Biblical doctrine.¹⁷ In the ordination vows I took when I became a pastor in the LC-MS, I promised to abide by the canonical books of the Old and New Testaments as the infallible and inerrant Word of God and the only source and norm for all that we believe, teach, and confess and to abide by the Lutheran Confessions as a faithful and accurate exposition of Scripture. From beginning to end the Lutheran Confessions declare unwavering allegiance to the Scripture as the Word of God.

In response to the summons of Emperor Charles V, Luther and his colleagues from Wittenberg prepared the Augsburg Confession (AC) to demonstrate their orthodoxy and address issues of reform. The AC marches through the chief doctrines of the Christian faith stating briefly the reformers' position on each. In Article V "Concerning the Office of Preaching," they wrote, "To obtain such faith God instituted the office of preaching, giving the gospel and the sacraments. Through these, as through means, he gives the Holy Spirit who produces faith, where and when he wills, in those who hear the gospel."¹⁸ In Luther's Large Catechism, the explanation to the Third Article of the Apostles' Creed, Luther wrote concerning the work of the Holy Spirit in bringing a

¹⁷ R. Kolb, T.J. Wengert, and C.P. Arand eds., *The Book of Concord: The Confessions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2000). The Book of Concord contains the Ecumenical Creeds and seven documents—The Augsburg Confession (1530), Apology of the Augsburg Confession (September 1531), The Smalcald Articles (1537), the Treatise on the Power and Primacy of the Pope (1537), The Small Catechism (1529), The Large Catechism (1529), and the Formula of Concord (1577).

¹⁸ Kolb, Wengert, and Arand, 40. Note: Article IV Concerning Justification concludes with the statement, "For God will regard and reckon *this faith* as righteousness in his sight, as St. Paul says in Romans 3:21–26 and 4:5." Article V flows directly out of this statement. (Emphasis mine).

person to faith in Christ, “In order that this treasure might not remain buried but be put to use and enjoyed, God has caused the Word to be published and proclaimed, in which he has given the Holy Spirit to offer and apply to us this treasure, this redemption.”¹⁹ The final document in the Book of Concord, the Solid Declaration of the Formula of Concord sums up the theological framework of this thesis-project on the preached Word of God:

All who want to be saved should listen to this proclamation. For the proclamation and the hearing of God’s Word are the Holy Spirit’s tools, in, with, and through which he wills to work effectively and convert people to God and within whom he wants to effect both the desire for and the completion of their conversion.

A person who has not yet been converted to God and been reborn can hear and read this Word externally, for in such external matters, as stated above, people have a free will to a certain extent even after the fall, so that they may go to church and listen or not listen to the sermon.

Through these means (the preaching and hearing of his Word), God goes about his work and breaks our hearts and draws people, so that they recognize their sins and God’s wrath through the preaching of the law and feel real terror, regret, and sorrow in their hearts. Through the preaching of the holy gospel of the gracious forgiveness of sins in Christ and through meditating upon it, a spark of faith is ignited in them, and they accept the forgiveness of sins for Christ’s sake and receive the comfort of the promise of the gospel. In this way the Holy Spirit, who effects all of this, is sent into their hearts.

It is indeed true that both the planting and watering of the preacher and the activity and desire of the hearer would be in vain, and no conversion would result from these efforts, if the power and action of the Holy Spirit were not added to them. For the Spirit enlightens and converts hearts through the Word that is proclaimed and heard, so that people believe the Word and say yes to it.²⁰

The Lutheran Confessions state clearly and repeatedly, the power of the Word of God, and the Holy Spirit’s use of the Word of God, is delivered through preaching to convert and transform God’s fallen human creatures.

¹⁹ Kolb, Wengert, and Arand, 436.

²⁰ Kolb, Wengert, and Arand, 554.

Current Reflections on Lutheran Preaching

The rich heritage of Lutheran theology and preaching continues to be discussed and debated today. As mentioned in Chapter 1 the continual need to challenge preachers to tend to their preaching, think about it theologically, and seek to improve it is as real today as it was in the 16th Century. One author put it this way, “The lifeless state of preaching today is alarming enough to wake the dead” and observes that the Reformation’s attempt to improve preaching has in many ways failed, while acknowledging that God has no backup plan to preaching.²¹ In this section I want to explore some of the challenges in Lutheran preaching and how they bear on my thesis-project.

The first challenge is the need for preachers to speak authoritatively with the confidence that God is working through his or her message, which is drawn faithfully from the Scripture. A central component of the Lutheran theology of preaching is the conviction that the preached Word of God is an event — a Word event — in which God is actually doing something. Gerhard Forde gives voice to the importance of this understanding:

What actually happens when true proclamation is published in this old world? The result of this act or *doing*, as Forde calls it, is not just providing more information for the hearer, nor is it presenting a possibility for a decision, nor could we call it obedience to the rule of faith, nor is it even some analogy between image and prototype. Instead, proclamation accomplishes the death of the old sinner and the resurrection of the new saint *in faith itself*. Faith, as we learn from the Apostle Paul, comes “by hearing” (Romans 10).²²

²¹ Gerhard O. Forde, *The Preached God: Proclamation in Word and Sacraments*, ed. Mark C. Mattes and Steven D. Paulson (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans 2007), 12.

²² Forde, 6. Forde died in 2005. He lectured for years at Luther Seminary in St. Paul, MN. This work is a publication of those lectures.

It is this “Word-event” understanding of preaching that brings preaching into the present moment and breathes life into sermons. The temptation and the struggle of preaching is to talk about God rather than striving to bring a Word from God to the listeners. Preachers are sometimes hesitant to speak authoritatively, to proclaim what God is saying in the text. This has led some in Lutheran circles to prefer the word “proclamation” over “preaching” because the latter term can connote pulpit talk, secondary discourse, explaining and talking about God. “Proclamation on the other hand, belongs to the primary discourse of the church. Proclamation in its paradigmatic or ideal form is first- to second-person, present-tense, unconditional address.”²³ The purpose of this emphasis on proclamation is not to disparage the term “preaching,” although it sometimes implies that preaching is less than proclamation, but rather to intensify preaching by driving home that it is God who is acting through his preached Word. Thus it is the present-tense proclamation “I love you,” “I forgive you” that people are starved for, not as opposed to “the Bible says God loves and forgives you.” “The silence has to be broken. There has to be a living word, a present-tense I-to-you declaration. Somebody, that is, must take the risk of proclamation. God did. And our only commission is to follow and do it.”²⁴ Proclamation therefore, is envisioned as “doing” the text to the listener. It can involve explaining what the text means, even applying it to listener’s lives, but all of this must be in service to doing in the hearers what God intended to do when he gave the words of the biblical text. As John Stott observes preaching is the bridge between the ancient world of the original text and the present. “One must see what it did and then re-aim it to do the

²³ Forde, 45.

²⁴ Forde, 55.

same thing in the present to the assembled hearers.”²⁵ In this sense Lutheran preaching is thoroughly expository. The problem that often arises, in spite of this view of preaching as proclamation, is an anemic version of Lutheran preaching as law then gospel often stereotyped as making the listener feel bad with the law so that you can comfort them with gospel. Preaching that “does” the Word to the listener is what is needed today or it “degenerates into mere instruction or cheap psychologizing.”²⁶ From the perspective of my thesis-project audience analysis is critical to unleashing this powerful word into the real-life circumstances of the listeners. When the preacher knows where his listeners are hurting and hiding and has this understanding of the preached Word he can more effectively bring the word to bear on their lives.

A second challenge is the decline of cultural Christianity in America which calls into question the effectiveness of preaching in delivering this powerful Word of God to the listeners. In a collection of essays entitled *Feasting in a Famine of the Word: Lutheran Preaching in the Twenty-First Century* the editors address some of the unique contributions Lutheran preaching has to offer in the ongoing conversation about homiletics. The point, for the purpose of this chapter, is to note how the theological distinctiveness of Lutheran homiletics enhances the connection of preaching to real-life circumstances of the listeners.

One of the struggles preachers face is competing with the consumerism of American culture for the attention of his or her listeners. In Lutheran circles some seek to avoid this influence by ignoring the culture altogether while others have imbibed the spirit of the times and tried to make sermons “fun” for the listeners. In an essay entitled,

²⁵ Forde, 95.

²⁶ Forde, 99.

“Is There a Text In This Sermon,” John Bombaro, a Lutheran pastor, discusses the corrosive effects of consumerism on American homiletics. He notes every preacher in America regardless of denomination “must address their auditors making conscious decisions about the task of the preacher and purpose of proclamation vis-à-vis consumerism and the conditioned expectations of auditors.”²⁷ It is precisely here that the understanding of the sermon as a dynamic interplay of God’s Word of law and gospel sets the preacher free to be creative in the way he structures his sermon to the impact consumeristic listeners. In other words a proper understanding of law and gospel, not as a sermon structure (first you make them feel bad, then you make them feel good) but rather, as the activity of God through his Word, allows the preacher to engage the culture and craft a sermon that creatively brings that Word of God to bear on the listener. Training future preachers to continuously assess these cultural influences on their listeners will aid them in connecting the Word of God they are proclaiming to their listeners.

Daniel Schmitt identifies a third challenge in Lutheran preaching in his essay, “Present Preaching.” Central to Lutheran preaching is the understanding that the preacher is called by God and ordained by the church to speak God’s Word to the people. Although this high view of the office of preaching can and has led to abuse, properly understood it empowers the preacher and his listeners. “Preachers and hearers alike should reverence faithful preaching as Spirit-given holy speech that creates and sustains

²⁷ John Bombaro, “Is There a Text in This Sermon,” in *Feasting in a Famine of the Word: Lutheran Preaching in the Twenty-First Century*. ed. Mark W. Birkholz, Jacob Corzine, Jonathan Mumme (Eugene: Pickwick Publications, 2016), 7.

faith in God's children, not simply as brief lectures or periods of instruction."²⁸ Good preaching, according to Daniel Schmidt, flows from a theology of the Word, which understands that God is present in his word and is present specifically for the hearer through this unique sermon.

Thus a preacher learns that with all the work he continually puts into his preparation, it is not he who speaks but the living God. And he marvels at this incredible truth: that God entrusts his precious, life-saving, eternal word to a weak, sinful person like himself, and that he gives his Holy Spirit with it in order to accomplish what he sends it for. A sermon preached on this basis is a good sermon.²⁹

For the purposes of my thesis-project this high view of the preaching office as one "called and ordained" to proclaim God's Word to these particular listeners is important because it gives the preacher confidence that the effectiveness of his or her sermon is always a function of the Holy Spirit. Every preacher has had the experience of feeling like his sermon was less than adequate only to have a member exclaim how powerful it was in their immediate life circumstance. While audience analysis can become overwhelming, this perspective helps keep the preacher from getting lost in the maze of culture and the circumstances of the listeners.

Connecting the Living and Active Word of God to the Listeners

Having established the dynamic quality God's Word to do what it says, and the Lutheran understanding that preaching is a present moment embodiment of the gospel of Jesus Christ as God's living and active, powerful Word, which accomplishes His purpose

²⁸ David Petersen, "The Preacher's Tongue and the Hearer's Ear," in *Feasting in a Famine of the Word: Lutheran Preaching in the Twenty-First Century*, ed. Mark W. Birkholz, Jacob Corzine, Jonathan Mumme (Eugene: Pickwick Publications, 2016), 208.

²⁹ Daniel J. Schmidt, "Present Preaching," in *Feasting in a Famine of the Word: Lutheran Preaching in the Twenty-First Century*, ed. Mark W. Birkholz, Jacob Corzine, Jonathan Mumme (Eugene: Pickwick Publications, 2016), 274.

in the lives of listeners I will conclude this chapter by exploring the rich variety of language the Bible uses to express the gospel. The purpose of this section is to briefly examine one application of this theology of the Word and preaching in order to explore how the richness of language available to us allows us to proclaim God's saving word to the real-life circumstances of the listeners. The Lutheran law and gospel understanding of the Word has sometimes led to a flattening out of preaching into simplistic two-dimensional sermons. My thesis-project seeks to help students connect their preaching to the real-life circumstances of the listeners. While there are numerous ways to connect preaching more effectively to the lives of the listeners, for example, using first or third person narrative, or using a variety of sermon structures, identifying the rich variety of images used in the Scripture is a powerful tool. The preacher who has become aware of the real-life circumstances of his or her audience and recognizes the unique imagery of the text can bring the two together to proclaim the gospel in life-giving, life-changing ways. Jacob A.O. Preus in *Just Words: Understanding the Fullness of the Gospel*, provides a useful summary of some of the rich variety of metaphors used in the Scripture to connect the Word to the lives of listeners. The following is a sampling of Preus' unpacking of key biblical metaphors for preaching.³⁰

Preus' title catches the spirit of this chapter on the theological framework for my thesis-project. In the closing paragraph of his book he writes:

Yet the word with which Christians go out into all the world are not just words. They can never be just words because they are the very words of Christ, the Word of the Gospel, "the power of God for the salvation of everyone who believes" (Romans 1:16). The words themselves are powerful, rich, and evocative, not just words. They are words that make us just.³¹

³⁰ Jacob A.O. Preus, *Just Words: Understanding the Fullness of the Gospel* (St. Louis: Concordia, 2000), 41-201.

³¹ Preus, 220.

Preus begins with a definition of the Gospel as the doctrine of justification by grace given to us in words—spoken, personal (Jesus), and written (Scripture). As such God has provided a rich language, “one laden with colorful metaphors that speak of the wonderful things our God has done for us in Christ Jesus.”³² He carefully establishes that the word “metaphor” can imply something unreal or symbolic implying that it’s not literally true. Therefore we must be sure that when we talk about the use of metaphor to express the gospel we are in no way suggesting that it is something less than the actual, factual, historical life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ. But the language we use to unpack everything that means is often metaphorical.

“To explain what God did for us in Christ, the biblical writers, under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit borrowed language from other contexts: creation, commerce, law, relationships, sacrifice, and deliverance.”³³ Under these classifications Preus identifies twenty-three unique, but not exhaustive, metaphors that provide a smorgasbord of images for the preacher to communicate the gospel to his listeners. The following chart is a summary. I have chosen one metaphor from each category to demonstrate how the use of these metaphors can help a student preacher who knows his audience connect preaching to the real-life circumstances of the listeners.

Table 1: Summary of Preus’ Metaphors

Christ the Life-Giver: Creation Metaphors	Birth Life Salvation Light Bread and Water
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³² Preus, 27.

³³ Preus, 34.

Christ the Redeemer: Commerce Metaphors	Ransom Redemption Property Forgiveness/Remission
Christ the Judge: Legal Metaphors	Justification Intercession Adoption Inheritance
Christ the Reconciler: Personal Metaphors	Reconciliation Peace Forgiveness Marriage
Christ the Priest, Christ the Lamb: Sacrificial Metaphors	Expiation/Priestly Mediation Sacrificial Lamb Hallowing/Cleansing
Christ the Savior: Deliverance Metaphors	Salvation Liberation Victory

Creation Metaphors - Birth

Preus begins with one of the most vivid and powerful metaphors of the Gospel, “being born again.” (1 Pet 1:23-25). Nicodemus could not comprehend such language (John 3). This metaphor of the Gospel is particularly powerful in the lives of those who, like Nicodemus imagine that they are in control of their life, but also those who have lost, or never had a sense of purpose or meaning in their life. Others want to escape the realities of the present by living in the past. The birth metaphor forces the listener to consider what role they had in being born physically and recognize the same reality in their spiritual life. “Only the Spirit of God can do this. Our sinful flesh only generates what is of the flesh. We contribute as little to our spiritual birth as we do to our physical birth: nothing.”³⁴ The theological problem behind such feelings of being in control or

³⁴ Preus, 45.

having lost or never had a sense of purpose in life is that because of sin we are cut off from the very source of life—our relationship with God. Only by the power of His Holy Spirit are we born again into the fullness of life for which we were created. In the context of my thesis-project, knowing the real-life circumstances of the audience, knowing how they seek to control their lives and where they have lost a sense of purpose, makes this metaphor powerful.

Commerce Metaphors - Redemption

The metaphor of redemption, Preus asserts, is perhaps the most common for us. It is also a dead metaphor in that it has lost its connection to the original image portrayed. Redemption is closely related to ransom. Both are rooted in the setting of the slave trade. The image is one who stands chained, helpless and hopeless. People still experience slavery in all shapes and sizes. Human trafficking is real. But most experience slavery as an inability to escape particular life circumstances. Some are enslaved by poverty, others by wealth. The devil, the world, and our sinful flesh constantly threaten to own us. “While the *ransom* metaphor focuses on the *price* that is paid, the *redemption* metaphor focuses on the *act* of paying the price.”³⁵ The redemption metaphor speaks strongly to the delusion of being masters of our own destiny, that we are in charge of our own lives, that we are self-made. Jesus literally has to trade places with us in the redemption metaphor. He takes our place under the condemnation of the law. The power of the gospel in the redemption metaphor is brought to bear by the preacher when he knows the specifics of where his listeners feel particularly trapped and hopeless.

³⁵ Preus, 88.

Legal Metaphors – Intercession

Justification is the primary metaphor in this category. It has been the dominant metaphor of the gospel especially since the time of the Reformation. Preus writes, “It evokes an entire realm of thoughts and ideas. It brings to mind legal codes, crimes, courts of law, lawyers, judges, pleas, convictions, defenses, verdicts, and a host of other associations with which people can readily identify. The language is richly textured and vivid.”³⁶ Intercession adds another dimension to the legal metaphors. In the justification metaphor we stand condemned and are declared innocent before God for Jesus’ sake. The intercession metaphor adds the dimension of not standing alone to face our judgment. The imagery is of a person confronted with the complexity of the legal system and the courts but having no one to direct them, to advise them, to navigate the system for them. The feeling of isolation and being defenseless makes this metaphor of the gospel truly good news. Jesus takes our place as the defendant in the justification metaphor. He accepts the sentence of death, and suffers the punishment (Rom 5:19; 2 Cor 5:21). Now he intercedes for us before the Judge and defends us by arguing his own righteousness as ours. As intercessor Jesus does not plead for mercy in order to give us one more chance to try again. Jesus demands justice for us. He pleads us not guilty continuously before the Father on account of his satisfaction of our justly deserved punishment. For the listener struggling to overcome a persistent sin in their life this metaphor gives comfort and power to continue the fight.

³⁶ Preus, 111.

Personal Metaphors – Reconciliation

Preus observes that personal metaphors borrow from the realm of relationships to bring home the full power of the gospel. They emphasize things like forgiveness, unity, love, and relationship. Unique to the metaphor in our relationship with God is the fact that God does all the work of reconciling us in Christ. “The all-inclusive nature of this metaphor—its cosmic scope—shines through Paul’s words. More than perhaps any other Gospel metaphor, *reconciliation* reflects the universal aspect of Christ’s work. It is for all, for every human being.”³⁷ The condition behind the reconciliation metaphor is alienation. We experience alienation from one another, which causes hostility and barriers personally, socially, and culturally. Thus the reconciliation metaphor operates on multiple levels of our experience. Individuals experience brokenness in families and friendships. The reconciliation metaphor is often used in marriage to describe what happens when a couple that has separated is reunited. Paul uses the term extensively to describe the healing of the relationship between groups of people, such as, Jews and Gentiles (Eph 2:14-16; Gal 3:28). In our alienation from God as our Creator we feel incomplete. The gospel first reconciles us to God. In Christ the dividing wall of hostility has been removed. Reconciled to God in Christ we can overcome the barriers with others. Interestingly in Christ our differences become a rich depth of variety in our lives. Preachers who know where their listeners are experiencing alienation can use this metaphor to bring the restoring power of the gospel to their lives.

³⁷ Preus, 140.

Sacrificial Metaphors – Expiation, Priestly Mediation

The sacrificial metaphors of the Scripture, according to Preus, are numerous and difficult for modern western culture. The idea of blood sacrifices to appease an angry God seems barbaric and primitive. Added to the difficulty of this metaphor are words used to apply it—expiation and propitiation. It's hard for the modern mind to grasp the meaning. Expiation is the removal of our guilt—our sin is “ex-ed” out. Propitiation is the restoration of God's favor toward us—he is now “pro” us. Interestingly, as unappealing as this imagery of God's anger being real and being satisfied by sacrifice is, it speaks powerfully to an incipient rage that boils in our culture.

The anger we experience in our lives is a sinful, distorted image of a much more profound rage that God has because of our sins. God is offended by our sin, and he cannot “sweep it under the rug.” He can't just “forget about it.” Something must be done to appease God, to restore His offended honor, to compensate Him for His injury.³⁸

While we prefer a God who is gentle and kind and easy to handle, people seem to instinctively know that God is not pleased with humanity. It is a common, if not universal reaction, when something bad happens to wonder why God is punishing us and for people to try and “get their act together”—start going to church, read the Bible, pray more—in hopes of restoring God's favor. The sacrificial metaphors become a powerful communication of the gospel to break the cycle of bitterness and vengeance that plagues our world. When we experience Jesus' willing sacrifice on the cross and re-enter the awesome and fearsome presence of our loving God we are transformed to live by grace toward those who have wronged us.

³⁸ Preus, 172.

Deliverance Metaphors – Victory

The victory metaphor is used in Scripture to depict God providing victory in battle often against insurmountable odds. It is also applied to the spiritual battle between God and the forces of evil that seek to destroy us and God's good creation. Preus states, "A particularly potent way to say the Gospel therefore, is to say that Christ has engaged in battle with the forces of evil and has vanquished them, giving those who live in him the victory."³⁹ The danger of this metaphor is taking it too literally to mean that God destroys those who we consider to be our enemies. God's enemies are always those who would keep us from him eternally. Our enemies may be simply the people we have managed to wrong by our own sinfulness! In a culture where winning is everything, the sin problem behind this metaphor can be difficult to admit. We hate being victims or feeling dependent on anyone or anything. And that makes us all the more weak and vulnerable to our true enemies, which are God's enemies of sin, death, and the devil. Jesus victory in his resurrection destroys the power of sin, death, and the devil in the lives of those who believe. We have the resources to fight and win the battle of temptation and fear. The ultimate victory comes in the resurrection when "death has been swallowed up in victory" (1 Cor 15:54). Romans 8:37 declares us in Christ to be "more than conquerors." For all the times when listeners feel defeated by life this metaphor breathes hope and courage into their circumstances.

Preus concludes his work by noting the universality of these gospel metaphors.

He writes:

They cut across what divides us as human beings. There is not a people-group in the world to which the Gospel is utterly incomprehensible. We have a way of

³⁹ Preus, 203.

saying it that will make sense, that will be intelligible, to every person. If one way of saying it doesn't make sense, another way will.⁴⁰

In the context of my thesis-project this understanding of the richness and variety of gospel metaphors provides a biblical and theological basis for preachers to apply the gospel to the real-life circumstances of listeners. Because of our historical context Lutherans have tended to focus on the legal metaphors as the primary way of communicating the gospel. In preaching, that can result in a flat, predictable proclamation of God's Word that leaves hearers cold. "These living metaphors free our words from their captivity to generalizations and spiritualizing; the Gospel no longer is viewed as 'church-talk' or 'preacher's language.'"⁴¹ The preacher who knows his audience and grasps the richness of these gospel metaphors in the Word will be better able to connect his or her preaching to the real-life circumstances of their listeners.

Summary

In this chapter I have examined the doctrine of Scripture as the dynamic Word of God, which has the power to do what it says, to accomplish God's work of rescuing us from sin, death, and eternal separation from Him and work new life in us. I have documented our Lutheran understanding of God's Word and how the living and active nature of the Word works in preaching as a means which the Holy Spirit uses to create and sustain faith and to lead and strengthen people in their Christian life of obedience that comes from faith. In Chapter 3 I will survey literature to understand audience analysis and its use in preaching in order to enable the vicars I supervise to bring this rich theology of God's Word and preaching to bear on the real-life circumstances of listeners.

⁴⁰ Preus, 211.

⁴¹ Preus, 215.

CHAPTER THREE

LITERATURE REVIEW

“Begin with the end in mind” has become proverbial in conversations ranging from strategic planning to parenting. The wisdom of having a destination in mind before you begin any endeavor is self-evident. Preachers are taught to clearly identify the goal of every sermon before they begin crafting their message. While the goal of every sermon is determined first and foremost by the text of Scripture from which the sermon is developed, the communication of that goal resides in the interaction between the preacher and the listeners. John Stott captures the challenge of preaching with his iconic model of the preacher building a bridge between the ancient world of the text and the modern world of the listener.¹ Much attention is given in the training of preachers to carefully study the foot of the bridge in the ancient world, but the head of the bridge in the life of the listeners is somewhat elusive. Every age in the life of God’s people bears its own unique challenges. Every congregation is set in a unique community shaped by many forces. Every preacher has a unique personality that impacts the way he or she interacts with the listeners.

Study of the text can be mastered through the disciplines taught in an academic environment. The intricacies of exegesis are honed by the study of the original languages, hermeneutics, literature, ancient culture, even geography. Commentaries and dictionaries and software and online resources are plentiful to assist the preacher in constructing the foot of the bridge. The head of the homiletical bridge in the lives of the listeners is not so easily taught. In fact it could be argued that analysis of listeners is gained primarily by

¹ John Stott, *Between Two Worlds: The Art of Preaching in the Twentieth Century* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1982).

the preacher's experience in the context of being a pastor to his or her listener's lives. The Lutheran Church – Missouri Synod's Masters of Divinity program through Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, MO and Concordia Theological Seminary, Ft. Wayne, IN, features a twelve-month internship, called "vicarage," in a congregational setting for future pastors of our denomination. The vicarage offers a unique opportunity to develop the student's skills in listener analysis in real-time. The purpose of this thesis-project is to equip supervisor's in mentoring students during vicarage to more effectively connect the student's preaching to the real life circumstances of the listeners by developing their skills in analyzing the people and the context in which they are preaching. Therefore, three areas of study are pertinent to this thesis-project. I will survey the current scholarship in these domains. First, I will survey the relationship of audience analysis and effective communication in the broad category of public speaking. Since ancient times rhetoricians have recognized that effective speaking requires awareness of who the audience is, where they come from, why they are there and what they may be thinking and feeling as they listen. Second, this thesis-project is focused on a specific kind of public speaking, namely preaching. I will survey what homileticians have said about the unique nature of analyzing a congregation as listeners of a sermon. In this section I will also examine methods for conducting such analysis. Thirdly, mentoring students in a vicarage environment requires a variety of skills. I will explore what education experts have discovered as best practices for effective mentoring.

Public Speaking and Audience Analysis

In this section I will examine what some scholars in the field of public speaking have said about audience analysis. Every text I examined contains some version of this

statement: “Public speaking is audience centered.” Often referencing Aristotle as the father of modern public speaking theory one author writes: “Aristotle believed and practically all students of public speaking since his time have agreed, that the audience determines the end and object of the speech. Before you plan your talk, then, learn as much as you can about your prospective audience.”² The beginning of audience analysis, according to Duane Litfin, is to understand the way people listen. According to Litfin, listening is a difficult skill that does not come naturally. Studies have shown that the average person can hold their attention on a single stimuli for only a few seconds. We also live in a culture that does not put a high value on listening. American culture is much more visually oriented. Add to that the inundation of information to which we are exposed and it is not surprising that listening fails poorly in our western culture. Listening for pleasure or enjoyment is less demanding than listening for comprehension and evaluation. At the heart of good listening is the ability to pay attention.³ Three basic factors of audience analysis are necessary in public speaking: demographic analysis, psychological profiling, and occasion analysis. After examining these three components of audience analysis I will survey how these factors impact the development and delivery of the speech.

² Paul Hibbs, *Speech for Today* (St. Louis, New York, San Francisco, Dallas: McGraw Hill, 1965), 102.

³ Duane A. Litfin, *Public Speaking*. (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1981), 38-43. Litfin provides a helpful list of things that are likely to command our primary focus. *Novelty*: our attention is drawn to things that are different from what we would expect. *Movement or activity*: when all else is relatively still, movement will capture our attention: likewise, when all else is moving the stationary will often stand out. It is the contrast that captures our attention. *Proximity*: of the wide range of stimuli we receive, those which are perceived as being close to us in time and space will claim our involuntary attention. *Concreteness*: that which is specific, vivid and concrete stands out from the abstract, the general, and the bland. *Familiarity*: in a setting where things are unfamiliar and unknown that which is familiar stands out. *Conflict*: where harmony generally prevails, opposition between two or more things tends to grasp our attention. *Suspense*: when we have the entire picture except a few key pieces we are drawn to the missing pieces to see how the whole fits together. *Intensity*: when something stands out as more intense than the surroundings, we will involuntarily pay attention to it. *Humor*: at the heart of almost all humor is some form of incongruity, something which is not where or what it is supposed to be. *Life-relatedness*: those things which are related to our “felt needs” in life tend to draw our attention.

Demographic analysis of the audience may include age, gender, education, group membership, cultural and ethnic background. The goal is to determine whether any of these factors will affect the audience's willingness to listen and accept the message. Knowing the demographics of the audience can affect such things as volume and rate, what examples or illustrations you use, and ways to relate if the speaker's life experience is different from the audience's experience.⁴ For the preacher, demographic analysis of the congregation is the most straightforward. The data is primarily objective information that can be accessed from different sources. The US Census Bureau provides extensive information about the age, race, gender, and ethnic background of the community in which his congregation is located.⁵ The Lutheran Church Extension Fund in our denomination provides detailed demographic analysis of local communities to assist both the development of new mission opportunities and established ministries.⁶ In addition to community demographic information many congregations now maintain electronic databases that can generate reports with this information about the specific makeup of the membership. The preacher may discover that the demographics of his or her congregation do not match the demographics of community around the church. A desire to grow in worship attendance requires the preacher to adapt his preaching to speak more effectively to other segments of the population.

I have examined the basics of demographic analysis of the audience. I will now consider the second factor of basic audience analysis, psychological profiling.

⁴ Bruce E. Gronbeck, et al., *Principles and Types of Speech Communication* (Glenview: Scott, Foresman and Company, 1990), 93-94.

⁵ "Population," United States Census Bureau, "accessed November 3, 2016, <http://www.census.gov/topics/population.html>.

⁶ "Demographics," Lutheran Church Extension Fund, accessed November 3, 2016, <https://lcef.org/demographics/>.

Psychological profiling of the audience is more nuanced and complex. It involves an awareness of the listener's beliefs, values and attitudes. Gronbeck states that beliefs, values, and attitudes are critical to the speaker's ability to inform and persuade the audience. I will look at each of these components separately.⁷

According to Gronbeck, beliefs are influenced by facts and opinions. Some beliefs are fixed and some are variable. Fixed beliefs are those that have been set in place by life experience. These tend to become more concrete over time so that age demographics can give an indication of common fixed beliefs. Fixed beliefs are difficult to change. Even the presentation of verifiable facts may not persuade an audience to alter their fixed beliefs. Sometimes opinions widely held by an audience are considered as facts even if they are not true. Opinions are more readily affected.⁸ If a preacher comes from a similar demographic background as his congregation he may have a natural sense of the fixed beliefs held by his listeners. For example, if he grew up in The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod and he's serving a long established congregation of older adults, the belief that the Bible is the inspired, inerrant word of God would be a strongly held fixed belief. Variable beliefs are less strongly held and can be influenced more readily. Knowing which of your audience's beliefs are fixed and which are variable is important because it effects the strategies, the kind of evidence, and the expectation for change the speaker will use to influence the audience. The preacher's best tool for assessing the beliefs of his congregation is the time he spends listening to them.

⁷ Gronbeck, et al., 94-101.

⁸ Gronbeck, et al., 94-101.

Gronbeck continues, “Attitudes may be defined as tendencies to respond positively or negatively to people, objects, or ideas.”⁹ The audience may have positive, negative, or neutral attitudes toward the speaker or toward the subject matter of the speech. Attitudes toward the speaker include respect and friendliness. The listeners may respect the speaker but not particularly like him or her. Factors that affect listeners’ attitudes toward the speaker are such things as the perceived intelligence and expertise of the speaker, fairness, justness and sincerity toward the subject, and clear well-developed arguments for the idea or claim being made. The speaker can strengthen the audience’s friendliness by speaking energetically, appearing alert and comfortable, and showing interest in them as listeners. The audience’s attitude toward the subject may range from:

1. Favorable but not aroused
2. Apathetic to the situation
3. Interested in the situation but undecided what to do or think about it.
4. Interested in the situation but hostile to the *proposed* attitude, belief, or action.
5. Hostile to any change from the present state of affairs.¹⁰

Knowing the audience’s attitude toward the subject will determine the structure and content of the message. However, the audience’s attitude can never be fully known prior to a speech and it can change during the speech. For this reason the speaker must watch listeners’ reaction during the speech and make adjustments.

In applying this information to the preaching task the preacher’s awareness of his own *ethos* is critical.¹¹ *Ethos* consists of the audience’s perception of the preacher’s

⁹ Gronbeck, et al., 97.

¹⁰ Gronbeck, et al., 99.

¹¹ Ethos can be defined as: “Persuasive appeal that comes from the receiver’s complex set of attitudes toward the source that exists in a particular situation,” Dr. Jeffrey Arthurs, class lecture. The Greek rhetorician Isocrates observed: “Who does not know that words carry greater conviction when spoken by men of good repute than when spoken by men who live under a cloud, and that the argument which is made by a man’s life is more weight than that which is furnished by words?” *Antidosis*, trans. George Norlin (London: William Heinemann, 1929), 2:239.

good sense, good character, good will, and dynamism. Good sense is demonstrated by the preacher's competence, intelligence, confidence, knowledge, wisdom, qualifications, and expertise. Dave McClellan in *Preaching By Ear* discusses the importance ethos. The preacher's willingness and ability to assess his congregation's perception of these qualities in himself or herself is an important part of audience analysis. The preacher's time spent listening to his members is the primary source of developing a strong *ethos* in this area. His or her engagement in continuing education and being conversant with culture can improve their perception. The second component of *ethos* is good character. Good character is revealed when a preacher maintains a high moral standard in his own life, is honest, trustworthy and sincere. Most congregations are willing to grant the preacher high marks on character by virtue of their respect for the office, but it is easily damaged, and once lost may be impossible to recover. The third component of *ethos* is good will. Good will is demonstrated when the preacher appears selfless, friendly, and likeable. Such characteristics are often deeply rooted in personality, but the preacher may be able to address how he is perceived by seeking counseling and coaching. Spending time with members is again invaluable to develop and maintain good will.¹² The fourth component, identified by modern communication theory, is dynamism. Em Griffen explains that dynamism is associated with the preacher's ability to be engaging, forceful, energetic, and enthusiastic. While these can probably be manufactured, genuine dynamism rests in the preacher's personal relationship with Jesus and the work of the Holy Spirit in his or her life.¹³

¹² Dave McClellan, *Preaching by Ear: Speaking God's Truth from the Inside Out* (Wooster: Weaver Book Company, 2014), 25-30.

¹³ Em Griffen, *The Mind Changers: The Art of Christian Persuasion* (Carol Stream: Tyndale House, 1976), 115-131.

The final component of psychological profiling of an audience is identifying values. Values are broad groupings of beliefs and attitudes that form a listener's worldview. Values are what shape beliefs and attitudes. Values can become habitualized and form ideologies among larger groups of people. The preacher will certainly need to be aware of listener's values if he or she hopes to influence them with the sermon. Congregations frequently form around a shared value system rooted in the ethical and moral standards of the Bible. Variations can occur based on any number of demographic factors. Awareness of the listener's values is enhanced by spending time listening and interacting with the congregation.

I have briefly explored demographic analysis and psychological profiling as components of audience analysis. I will now examine analysis of the occasion as the final component of audience analysis. Gronbeck, et al. define an "occasion" as "a set of activities that occurs in a time and place set aside for those activities to fulfill collective purposes for and by people who have been taught the special meanings of those activities."¹⁴

Every occasion carries with it expectations and codes of conduct that a speaker must observe in order to be effective. Audience expectations can be summarized as rules, roles, and competency. Rules are the accepted norms for a specific occasion. These rules are primarily common sense—conversational delivery is better than reading, an introduction needs to get the attention of the listeners, larger audience require exaggerated gestures, and so on. Gronbeck identifies the general roles that a speaker may play are informer, persuader, or entertainer. Knowing what the audience expects for a given occasion is mandatory. Competency is determined by how effectively the speaker

¹⁴ Gronbeck, et al., 101.

fulfills the role the audience expected. If the listeners were expecting reasoned arguments to inform them and the speaker delivers comedic monologue they will judge the speaker incompetent.¹⁵

Key factors for analyzing an occasion include: the nature and purpose of the occasion, the prevailing rules or customs, the physical conditions, and events preceding or following your speech.¹⁶ For example, if the occasion is such that the listeners are required to be present, they will be less interested in what you have to say and generally more resistant. Understanding the rules or customs of an occasion, Gronbeck observes, depends heavily on whether the speaker is an insider or an outsider to the group. The physical conditions includes everything from the weather for an outdoor venue to the public address system available to amplify the speaker's voice. Events preceding or following can affect the audience's ability to listen. Everyone knows the struggle of being first up right after a heavy lunch. The implications of these factors for the preacher are numerous. While most listeners on Sunday morning are present voluntarily the preacher should not ignore the presence of those who are there begrudgingly, such as a spouse or teenage children. Preachers who flaunt the local customs weaken the impact of their sermon. If the custom is to preach twenty minutes and the preacher consistently preaches thirty to thirty-five minutes he will create resistance in some listeners. Likewise a congregation who is accustomed to the preacher preaching from the pulpit can be distracted if, suddenly and with no prior explanation or warning the preacher starts wandering the aisles during the sermon. Guest preachers are sometimes given more leeway to ignore local custom. Finally the preacher's presence in the entry area before

¹⁵ Gronbeck, et al., 103-106.

¹⁶ Gronbeck, et al., 107.

and after the service can affect the sermon's impact on listeners. A friendly smile, a greeting and a handshake or a hug goes a long way to increase receptivity.

The survey of demographic analysis, psychological profiling, and analysis of the occasion as key factors in audience analysis has revealed that they are important aspects of effective communication. I turn now to briefly examine how this analysis is applied to the development of the speech.

Duane Litfin asserts that virtually every part of speech making is affected in some way by audience analysis. Subject matter should, if it hasn't been assigned, be chosen with the audience's interest in mind. The statement of purpose, both general and specific, is developed to produce maximum impact on the audience. The arrangement of the message and the choice of supporting material will be different depending on demographic and psychological factors of the audience. The introduction to the speech and to some extent the conclusion must engage the listeners for the message to be effective so it behooves the speaker to write these with thoughtful awareness of what his audience needs to engage in listening and act on what has been said. Even the choice of language and delivery style is audience specific.¹⁷

Litfin observes that from the audience analysis one might apply Maslow's hierarchy of needs to guide the choice of subject matter, its structure and development.¹⁸ Human beings are need fulfillers. Knowing where your audience is on Maslow's hierarchy shapes the message the speaker gives if he wants them to listen. In addition human beings seek cognitive consistency. "There are few postulates of modern

¹⁷ Litfin, 67-70.

¹⁸ Abraham H. Maslow theorized that all human behavior is motivated by man's attempt to meet a hierarchy of needs. 1. Physiological needs. 2. Safety needs. 3. Love needs. 4. Esteem needs. 5. The need of self-actualization.

psychology which are as widely accepted and as solidly based as this assertion: *people desire mental consistency and strive very hard to maintain it, often at the expense of the truth.*”¹⁹ Audience analysis allows the speaker to assess these factors and adjust to them to maximize the potential for influencing them.

Gronbeck *et al* explains in more detail how the connection between the human desire for satisfaction of needs and mental consistency came together in Alan Monroe’s “Motivated Sequence.” Monroe, a professor at Purdue University drew on American philosopher John Dewey’s problem-oriented focus to creating order through a pattern of thought Dewey called “reflective thinking” and recognized the connection to Maslow’s hierarchy of needs. Besides the problem-oriented focus individuals can be inner-directed, or motivation centered. Alan Monroe, the original author of the textbook, *Principles and Types of Speech*, used Dewey’s work on the problem-oriented way of thinking and combined it with discoveries in sales and advertising on how people are motivated and created what has come to be known as “Monroe’s Motivated Sequence.” Monroe’s approach to writing a speech combined Dewey’s problem-solving or reflective-thinking procedure with an understanding of human motives so that his motivated sequence is both problem oriented and motivation centered. The five basic steps of the motivated sequence are: Attention, Need, Satisfaction, Visualization, and Action. First you draw attention to a problem, then you seek to create a personal need to solve the problem, then you offer a solution that satisfies the problem, then help the listener visualize how your solution makes a difference, and finally call upon them to act on your proposed solution.²⁰

¹⁹ Litfin, 50-55.

²⁰ Gronbeck, et al., 180-182.

The overview of the literature on public speaking has demonstrated that effective speech communication is rooted in audience analysis. The more clearly a speaker understands who he or she is speaking to and the circumstances of life that shape their world the more effective the communication.

Homiletics and Audience Analysis

In this section I will examine what homileticians have said about the need for audience analysis in the development and delivery of a sermon. Two aspects of audience analysis will be explored. First, the preacher must have the audience clearly in view in every step of sermon development from choice of the text to the structure of the sermon and the choice of illustrative material. Second, the preacher's understanding of the audience will impact the delivery of the sermon.

Developing the Sermon with the Listeners in Mind

The preparation of a sermon begins with a careful study of a single text, in expository preaching, or a topic based on multiple texts of Scripture in topical preaching. As noted above in Chapter Two the preacher's perspective of the preaching office will determine how he or she approaches the developmental task of sermon writing. For the purpose of this thesis-project I assume the perspective of the preacher Thomas Long describes as that of a witness. The witness goes to the text of the Scripture and "sees" what God is saying and doing. The preacher then goes to the congregation and testifies before them what he has seen and heard.²¹ This is similar to John Stott's model of building a bridge between two worlds. One end of the bridge is anchored in the text where the preacher must discover the meaning of the text for the original hearers.

²¹ Thomas Long, *The Witness of Preaching* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 1989), 45-51.

Through the sermon the preacher must then carry that meaning to the other side and connect it to the lives of the listeners. David Schmitt in the manual used to teach

Homiletics I in his class at Concordia Seminary, St. Louis writes:

While there are many ways to approach a biblical text in the preparation of a sermon, two matters are essential. Your method should help you come to a clear understanding (1) of what God said and did through the text in its original historical context and (2) of what God says and does through the text as you preach it to your people.²²

The number and order of steps in sermon preparation vary among homileticians.

Haddon Robinson describes ten steps,²³ Brian Chapell has four steps,²⁴ Richard Caemmerer has five,²⁵ and David Schmitt has eight.²⁶ The audience to whom the sermon will be delivered influences all of the steps. For example Robinson's first three steps, (1) Select the passage; (2) Study the passage; and (3) Discover the exegetical idea are conducted within the context of a specific preaching event. The preacher lives with his congregation, knows their joys and sorrows, their sins and successes and goes to the Scripture to select a passage that speaks to their specific needs. He or she studies the passage, not in a vacuum, but from the context of the listeners. The preacher may develop a whole series of sermons based on the perceived needs of his congregation. In fact, Scott Gibson argues in *Preaching with a Plan* that in order for God to grow people into mature believers the preacher should consider selecting a whole year of preaching texts with the needs of his people in mind.²⁷ In liturgical traditions where the church year and the lectionary guide the selection of the preaching text the preacher nevertheless reads and

²² David Schmitt, "The Tapestry of Preaching" (St. Louis: Concordia Seminary Print Shop), 56.

²³ Haddon Robinson, *Biblical Preaching*, 2nd ed. (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2001), 51-182.

²⁴ Chapell, 50.

²⁵ Richard Caemmerer, *Preaching for the Church* (St. Louis: Concordia, 1959), 79-110.

²⁶ Schmitt, 68.

²⁷ Scott Gibson, *Preaching with a Plan* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2012), 95-113.

studies the assigned pericope from the vantage point of the listeners. Caemmerer in the study stages of his methodology says, “Two sets of skills must blend in the first stage of building the genuinely textual sermon. The one is exegesis. The other is exposition—making the sense and purpose of the text apply to a group of hearers who are to put it to work in life.”²⁸ Similarly, Schmitt in his steps one through six uses phrases like “Record your first impressions of the text: what it says to you and the people God has committed to your care” and “clarify how you might communicate these teachings to your people today.”²⁹ It is clear that even those parts of sermon preparation that might seem most distant from the listeners because they are focused primarily on the text are nevertheless influenced by the preacher’s awareness of those to whom the sermon will be delivered.

The impact of analyzing the listeners on the creation of the sermon continues as the preacher begins to analyze the data he has collected from his or her study of the text. In stage four of his method for expository preaching Robinson introduces three developmental questions: (1) What does the text mean? (2) Is it true? and (3) So what? or What difference does it make in the lives of the listeners?³⁰ All three questions require awareness and analysis of the audience. The first developmental question “What does this mean?” requires the preacher to analyze the degree of understanding the listeners have of the background and setting of a text of Scripture. The preacher must decide whether the listeners know the vocabulary of the text and the theological concepts contained in the text. To fail in this assessment of the listeners is to risk not only failing to communicate but miscommunicating, even misleading the listeners. The second developmental question, “Is it true?” is critical to effective preaching. You can no longer assume (if you

²⁸ Cammerer, 81.

²⁹ Schmitt, 68.

³⁰ Robinson, 73-100.

ever could) that listeners will believe something because “it’s in the Bible.” The preacher must seek to understand the skepticism of his listeners to the ideas contained in the text. Failing to do so risks communicating only with like-minded people or giving pat answers that will not serve the listeners well as they try to apply the teaching in real life. The third developmental question in Robinson is “What difference does it make?” The question demands that the preacher determine specific ways to apply the text to the listeners. Proper application demands knowledge of the audience in order to connect the meaning of the biblical text to the lives of the listeners. Robinson expects the preacher to “identify with their [the listener’s] intellectual, emotional, psychological, and spiritual reactions to God and to others around them.”³¹

Donald Sunukjian follows Robinson closely but expands on the second developmental question—Do we buy it?—by describing three reasons why listeners may not believe that what the preacher is telling them from the text is true: the listener may fail to see the cause-effect connection; it seems contrary to real life; or something else comes up that is more important.³² To overcome the broken cause-effect connection for the listener Sunukjian suggests that the preacher consider his own personal experience with the timeless truth he is trying to teach, reflect quietly on the truth praying for the Spirit’s help, and being in conversation with various sources of insight such as friends, family, members of the congregation and outside reading. The second objection that listeners may have—the timeless truth doesn’t coincide with my real life experience—must be addressed by anticipating the listener’s objections and seeking ways to overcome them. Sunukjian suggests that the preacher clarify the language for his listeners, making

³¹ Robinson, 91.

³² Donald Sunukjian, *Invitation to Biblical Preaching* (Grand Rapids: Kregel, 2007), 92-106.

sure they are on the same page and seek to demonstrate how the timeless truth does fit real life experience. One of the primary ways to accomplish this is to show how the opposite of the timeless truth leads to disaster.³³ The third objection that listeners may have—something more important takes precedent over the timeless truth—must be taken into consideration by anticipating the competing demands and the affections of the human heart. What sounds good on Sunday morning may pale in comparison to the reality of their immediate circumstances on Tuesday. Sunukjian counsels that the preacher acknowledge the competing demand but then balance the feelings of fear listeners may have for following the timeless truth by showing them how it can and has worked in specific situations and the downside of opting to ignore God’s word.³⁴

Addressing this issue of bringing the text over from the ancient world to the contemporary listener Sidney Greidanus introduces the word “relevance.”³⁵ The goal is not to make the text relevant but to find the relevance of the text and preach it to the congregation. Seminary training spends most of its time in the past, exploring the text and not enough time on building the bridge from the past to the present. Greidanus identifies the typical ways that preachers have wrongly tried to bridge the historical-cultural gap between the text and the congregation: allegorizing, spiritualizing, imitating biblical characters, and moralizing—all of these fail to faithfully preach the text. He argues that every text had relevance to the original listeners and therefore the job of the preacher is to discover that relevance for his listeners today.³⁶ To cross the historical-cultural gap the preacher needs to be aware of the discontinuities and continuities between the original

³³ Sunukjian, 95.

³⁴ Sunukjian, 97.

³⁵ Sidney Greidanus, *The Modern Preacher and the Ancient Text* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1988), 157.

³⁶ Greidanus, 158-166.

audience and the contemporary audience. He identifies some discontinuities as the progressive nature of revelation—the preacher needs to be aware of where he is in the bigger story of God; the stages of kingdom history—the preacher must recognize the difference in the issues facing the original hearers and contemporary hearers; and finally cultural changes—the preacher must take into account the Old Testament and New Testament customs, traditions, and general conditions that are vastly different from his modern listeners. Greidanus then identifies factors that have not changed between the time of the text and the time of the sermon: God and our identity as God’s people.³⁷ Finally, Greidanus argues that preaching fails to be relevant when the preacher separates explaining the text from applying the text as if they were two separate functions.³⁸ He reminds preachers that the biblical text was originally written and proclaimed as a relevant message to a specific group of human beings. Discovering that original relevance is the key to communicating that relevance to the contemporary listeners. Greidanus therefore advises that the preacher study the text with the needs of the listeners in mind, that he carefully aims the sermon at the head and the heart of the listeners rather than one or the other, and that he bring the listeners into a dialogue with the text, responding to their anticipated reactions to involve them in the text, and finally that he learn to paint pictures with his words.

In *The Tapestry of Preaching* Schmitt adds another dimension to the study of the text. After the examination of the biblical theology of the text—including its place in the larger context of the story of God, word studies, cross references, and commentaries—Schmitt advises “reading the text within the historical context of the Church’s doctrinal

³⁷ Greidanus, 166-173.

³⁸ Greidanus, 181-187.

confession.”³⁹ He identifies five general areas to consider: the nature and work of God, the nature and work of humanity, and their relationship to one another. He recommends referencing the Scriptural index of *The Book of Concord* and the primary dogmatics text used in The Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod, Franz Pieper’s *Christian Dogmatics*. While this examination of the text seems coldly academic Schmitt concludes the section with these words:

Consider how to communicate this teaching effectively to contemporary hearers. What misunderstandings do people have about it? What false teachings does it correct? What images or stories or analogies can be used to explain it to people? Where is it embodied in Scripture, in the church’s history, in daily living?⁴⁰

Another dimension unique to Schmitt is considering the text within the liturgical setting of the service in which the sermon will be preached.⁴¹ The liturgical setting includes both the broad setting of considering where this sermon occurs in the liturgical church year and the narrow setting of how the sermon relates to other parts of the service in which it will be preached. These two dynamics require the preacher to know his audience. Longtime Lutherans may have the woof and warp of the liturgical calendar so embedded in their life that the flow of preaching from week to week weaves Advent, Christmas, Epiphany, Lent, Easter, and Pentecost together. Those unfamiliar with the liturgical church year are sometimes confused by three separate Scripture readings—an Old Testament, Epistle, and Gospel—and the sequence of those readings from week to week. Therefore the preacher needs to keep the audience clearly in view as he develops his sermon within the larger liturgical setting. Likewise, the narrower setting—how the sermon relates to other parts of service—will force the preacher to consider the sermon in

³⁹ Schmitt, 74.

⁴⁰ Schmitt, 75.

⁴¹ Schmitt, 201.

the context of the whole service including the responsive readings, hymns, and prayers to create a unifying impact on the listeners.

So far I have explored how the study of the text is influenced by the preacher's knowledge of the listeners. Next I will briefly consider how the choice and development of the structure of the sermon requires analysis of the audience. The end result of the study of the text is an exegetical statement that summarizes the meaning of the text for the original hearers. The preacher must now construct the span of the homiletical bridge that will allow the exegetical idea of the text to be transported to the lives of the listeners. Robinson calls it the "homiletical idea,"⁴² Sunukjian, "the timeless truth,"⁴³ for Caemmerer it is "the goal, malady and means,"⁴⁴ Chapell calls it the "fallen condition focus,"⁴⁵ and Schmitt follows Thomas Long in creating "focus and function" statements.⁴⁶ In every case the result is to be a clear and concise statement of what the sermon waiting to be written is supposed to accomplish in the lives of the listener.

The development of a sermon is a dynamic interplay of various disciplines: exegesis, hermeneutics, and homiletics. Over the past three decades the conversation of the relationship between these disciplines has altered the landscape of preaching. Paul Scott Wilson in *Preaching and Homiletical Theory* provides a helpful metaphor to picture the task of the preacher developing a sermon:

A suitable model for today is not a preacher taking three successive buses—exegesis, hermeneutics, homiletics. Nor is it the image of a biblical scholar handing a baton to a preacher at the end of the interpretative phase of a relay race. Rather, we might conceive a single bus filled with folks huddled in conversation in three groupings.

⁴² Robinson, 101-113.

⁴³ Sunukjian, 87-92.

⁴⁴ Caemmerer, 35-40.

⁴⁵ Chapell, 61.

⁴⁶ Schmitt, 68.

The first group is having a conversation about exegesis. Another group including Bible commentators, theologians, and preachers is talking about hermeneutics. A third group is talking about homiletics, including people from the congregation and from the preacher's own circle of family and acquaintances. These conversations happen simultaneously on the one bus. The circles of conversation are not clearly divided. Sometimes people in one group turn to join another. The preacher fluidly moves back and forth from conversation to conversation as the bus makes its way along Bible Boulevard and Today Street up to the church. The weekly route may be the same but each journey is different, for different people are on board according to the specific text and contemporary events in focus. In this model, homiletics shifts from being third-in-a-sequence to being one element of a threefold parallel activity of exegesis, hermeneutics, and homiletics.⁴⁷

This dynamic conversation has resulted in preaching today being in a state of transition according to Cosgrove and Edgerton. Over the past three decades shifts have occurred in the understanding of preaching from a perspective dominated by modernity toward an understanding of preaching from a perspective of post-modernity. They identify ten such shifts, all of which reflect increased attention on the listeners:

From the Priority of Reasoned Argument Toward the Priority of Constructive Imagination
From Meaning as Grasping a Proposition Toward an Experience of Meaning-Making
From Preaching as Interpretation of a Text Toward the Text as an Interpretation of Life
From Preaching as Instruction/Cognition Toward Preaching That Seeks to Address the Imagination
From Preaching That Seeks to Comment on (or Repeat) What the Text Says Toward Preaching that Seeks to Do What the Text Does.
From Preaching as an Independent Rhetorical Genre Toward Preaching That is Shaped by the Forms of the Texts
From Preaching as Discourse about the Text Toward the "Displaying of Icons"
From Preaching That is Considered in Isolation from Liturgy Toward Preaching That is Liturgically Integrated.
From Preaching That is Governed by the Dynamics of Writing/Reading Toward Preaching That is Governed by the Dynamics of Speaking/Hearing
*From Preaching as "Talks about Religion" Toward Preaching as Testimony*⁴⁸

⁴⁷ Paul Scott Wilson, *Preaching and Homiletical Theory* (St. Louis: Chalice Press, 2004), 36.

⁴⁸ Charles H. Cosgrove and W. Dow Edgerton, *In Other Words: Incarnational Translation for Preaching* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2007), 6-32.

Analyzing this shift from within the Lutheran perspective, particularly in his analysis of Richard Caemmerer's *Preaching for the Church*, David Schmitt writes, "As we look at this larger spectrum, we notice that Caemmerer taught at the very beginning of this major shift in preaching: the shift from traditional to kerygmatic, from informative to performative, from preaching as teaching to preaching as an event." Although the rational outline of traditional preaching remained the mainstay of Caemmerer's teaching of homiletics he "recognize[d] the broadened field of preaching, to see the possibilities that were being considered, and to prepare his students to remain faithful even as they walked into and explored that broader terrain."⁴⁹

The rich variety of structure available to the preacher as a result of this renewed study of homiletics gives him or her an expanded tool belt with which to work in bringing God's word to the listeners. Once again knowing the audience will influence the decision. If you are speaking to well educated, informed listeners a deductive structure that states its purpose up front and proceeds to logically develop the idea might be the best choice. On the other hand, speaking to young children or an audience without formal education an inductive or even narrative structure might be more effective. Desmond Soh explored the use of narrative preaching as a more effective means of reaching young people in his ministry in Singapore. His research revealed that the teenagers to whom he ministers showed an increased level in interest in sermons when they were delivered in narrative form. Interest in the sermon is a critical factor in the receptivity of religious messages especially among postmodern teenagers. A second thing Soh discovered is that the interest rating began to decline in the third week after the repetition of the same form over a five-week period. Soh noted that this might be a kind of "sermon form fatigue"

⁴⁹ Schmitt, 187-88.

and suggested further study to more specifically measure the connection between sermon form and sermon interest over an extended period of time.⁵⁰ Using a variety of forms can assist the effectiveness of preaching. Jeffrey Arthurs in *Preaching With Variety* looked at the variety of literary forms God used in the Bible such as poetry, narrative, parable, proverb, epistle, apocalyptic and posited that reflecting that variety in the sermon form enhances the listeners' ability to hear the message. "At times, though, 'listening to an exposition of Scripture is about as exciting as watching house paint dry.' Our listeners deserve better."⁵¹

David Schmitt has noted a peculiar problem in sermon form endemic in Lutheran preaching. The brilliance of Luther's recovery of law and gospel as the two primary teachings of the Scripture is reduced in Lutheran preaching to a monotonous two-part structure. Commenting on Richard Caemmerer's work that introduced "goal, malady, means" as a way of developing the law/gospel dynamic in the Scripture Schmitt writes:

Ironically, in contemporary preaching, goal, malady, means has become the opposite of what Caemmerer intended it to be. Instead of freeing preachers, it has constrained them. Instead of encouraging development in the art of preaching, it has discouraged it. Instead of grounding preachers in the one thing essential so that they can faithfully explore the broader homiletical horizons without leaving home, it has limited our homiletical vision to only one thing, law and gospel, so that some preachers oversimplify the integration of law/gospel into the art of preaching and others neglect it all together, leaving goal, malady, means behind, as they venture out into homiletical territory far from home. In essence, goal, malady, means has become a law/gospel substitute, revered by some, dismissed by others, and yet in both cases only a poor shadow of the challenging and difficult art of integrating law/gospel dynamics into weekly preaching that Caemmerer desired it to be.⁵²

⁵⁰ Desmond Soh, "Help Me Remember This Sermon" (D Min Thesis-Project. Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary, 2013), 125.

⁵¹ Jeffrey Arthurs, *Preaching With Variety* (Grand Rapids: Kregel, 2007), 18.

⁵² Schmitt, 198.

I have briefly examined the process of sermon preparation from text selection to sermon form in view of audience analysis. The final consideration is the role of audience analysis in the delivery of the sermon. Two components of delivery will be examined. First, the preacher has pre-delivery decisions to make based on his knowledge of the audience. Second, the skilled preacher will make adjustments during his delivery based on the visual feedback he or she is receiving from the congregation.

Before delivering a sermon analysis of the listeners will guide the preacher in numerous decisions. Perhaps the most obvious is the preacher's choice of dress and attention to personal grooming. In a liturgical setting the use of vestments can keep unkempt or mismatched clothing from being a distraction. However, the preacher is visible without robes before and after the service and the decisions listeners make about how they will listen or what they have heard are influenced by what they see. The age of listeners can affect how the preacher is perceived with respect to the choice of clothing. In general older adults look for formal attire, suit and tie, or a clerical collar. Every pastor who wears a robe has had a former military person comment on the condition of his shoes. Younger generations tend to be more suspicious of formal attire. Jeans and a polo shirt may in fact encourage a connection to the preacher that impacts their listening. Robinson sums it up, "In the final analysis, dress should not call attention to us, but should help us call attention to the Word of God."⁵³ Another pre-delivery consideration rooted in audience analysis is the use of body movement, hand gestures, and voice inflection. In some settings the use of a pulpit may be expected and acceptable. Leaving the pulpit in such places can be distracting, even disorienting to the listeners. Most research however indicates that listening to a talking head is less effective. Sunukjian

⁵³ Robinson, 207.

makes a strong argument that “there’s no communication advantage to standing immobile behind a box.”⁵⁴ In or out of the pulpit, the preacher ought to plan his movements with the audience in mind. Likewise the preacher’s gestures and facial expressions add to or take away from the effectiveness of his sermon. Robinson suggests that gestures must be spontaneous, definite, varied, and properly timed. The preacher’s gestures and facial expressions will vary from the children’s message, to a talk being delivered to the youth group, even in a formal worship setting depending on whether there are fifty or five thousand people present.⁵⁵ Finally voice inflection is a consideration the preacher should assess in view of his audience. “Listeners make judgments about your physical and emotional state—whether you are frightened, angry, fatigued, sick, happy, confident—based on the tremor of your voice.”⁵⁶ With the audience in mind the preacher plans his delivery. Where should he raise or lower the tone of his/her voice? What needs to be emphasized? How should he/she vary the rate? When should he/she pause? The preacher who wants to communicate knows his audience well enough to develop his delivery for maximum impact. Richard Caemmerer notes:

Now remember what all goes into making meaning. “Words, words, words,” you say? Right, but words surrounded by a man. ... He is always making meaning in the mind of his hearer when he preaches. But what meaning? Watch the making of meaning as a preacher speaks his words. He can say them frozen in posture and face, with no apparent concern beyond wanting to have it over with ... Or the preacher can flail his arms and rant with his voice. ... The net result, both times, is a roadblock for the meaning of the message itself; and the Decalog would call it taking the name of the Lord God in vain.⁵⁷

⁵⁴ Sunukjian, 301.

⁵⁵ Robinson, 201-206.

⁵⁶ Robinson, 213.

⁵⁷ Caemmerer, 50.

At the same time delivery cannot be artificial. Chapell calls it “heightened conversation.”⁵⁸ The preacher’s delivery needs to be natural to his personality but is intensified as a result of speaking to a larger group of people. Any delivery techniques that seem staged can cause the listeners to disengage from the message. Chapell references Ralph Lewis from a self-published book entitled *Speech for Persuasive*

Preaching:

Techniques that create listener distrust of speakers: obvious skills, artifice, or cleverness, labored didacticism, forthright sermonizing, loud haranguing—especially too much volume too early, constant hard-driving, persistent aggressiveness, ornateness, too evident use of technical skills, high-flown language, glib tongues.⁵⁹

The preacher must consider the situation in which he or she is going to speak as he or she prepares the delivery. What is the occasion? Is it a regular Sunday morning service or a wedding? Who is in the congregation? Is it primarily young or old? Are they life-long believers or are they new to the faith, in doubt, or skeptical? Much more could be said about preparation of the delivery based on the preacher’s analysis of his audience. While all of the ideas and suggestions are useful they must be held in balance with the soothing truth that all effective delivery is powered by the Holy Spirit working through the personality of the preacher.

Audience analysis before the delivery equips the preacher to be aware of the audience during delivery. I will comment briefly on the preacher’s ability to adjust his delivery based on the feedback received as he or she preaches.

⁵⁸ Chapell, 314.

⁵⁹ Chapell, Footnote 2, 315.

The primary feedback the preacher receives from the listeners is visual. Eye contact therefore is essential to reading the response of the listeners.⁶⁰ Looking listeners in the eye not only enhances their ability to hear what the preacher is saying, it also communicates back to the preacher the effect his or her words are having on them. Although some listeners will habitually smile and nod at everything the preacher says, a look of encouragement is a powerful indicator that you are connecting. Similarly a questioning look signals the need for clarification. Perhaps the most daunting are those times when listeners are looking around, checking their watches, or reading the bulletin. While it may be too late to win them back in the moment, disinterest is a strong indicator that something needs to change. It is easy to be distracted by the person who gets up and walks to bathroom in the middle of your main point, or the proverbial crying baby (although it is usually the happy, playing ones that steal the moment), or the teenage girls in the front passing notes and trying to control their giggles. The preacher needs to assess these annoyances and perhaps consciously ignore them while he is preaching.

Current Discussions of Audience Analysis Among Preachers

The need for audience analysis has been established in the general literature on public speaking and several primary homiletics textbooks. I now turn my attention to current discussions of audience analysis among contemporary preachers as it relates to cultural change in the United States. First I will briefly describe the shift from the modern era to the postmodern era. Then I will examine how two successful contemporary preachers, Andy Stanley and Timothy Keller, have sought to address these changes in their approach to preaching.

⁶⁰ Chapell, 319-320.

The primary cultural trend noted in the 21st century is the movement from modernity to postmodernity. The data and statistics on this cultural shift that has occurred over the past twenty-five years is staggering. Modernity is associated with the Enlightenment beginning anywhere from the mid 17th to the mid 18th century. Modernity was marked by confidence in our ability to discover and know the truth through human inquiry. Modernity began to crumble by the mid-late 20th century with the realization that the world was not getting better as a result of our knowledge and understanding. Postmodernity began to question the very existence of truth itself and pointed people inward to their own experience as the measure of what's true is what's true for me.

Graham Johnston observes in *Preaching to a Postmodern World*,

Where modernity was cocky, postmodernity is anxious. Where modernity had all the answers, postmodernity is full of questions, where modernity clung to certainty and truth, postmodernity views the world as relative and subjective. Postmodern people have not only abandoned ideology and truth but are likewise suspicious of those who claim to say "I know."⁶¹

As a result listeners tend to hear preaching as an expression of the preacher's personal opinion.

The struggle in adapting the message based on the analysis of postmodern listeners is finding ways to use our knowledge of them in order to lead them into what God has to say to them in his Word. Johnston observes that adapting the message and method of delivery to engage postmodern listeners requires careful attention to maintain the integrity of God's Word. It is tempting to water down the content of a sermon in the name of audience awareness.⁶² Since preaching is an act of communication it is a dynamic encounter between speaker and listeners. Meaning and relevance are the two

⁶¹ Graham Johnston, *Preaching to a Postmodern World* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2001), 26.

⁶² Johnston, 61-75.

key components of effective communication. As an example of the importance of meaning and relevance consider the simple task of reading a sign indicating the location of a restroom. Depending on whether you need to use the restroom or not the sign may have meaning but no relevance (I don't need to use the restroom right now so the sign isn't important); or if you're desperate, lots of meaning and relevance, and if you are in a place where you don't understand even the characters of the alphabet and you need to find the restroom, lots of relevance but no meaning. Preaching to postmodern listeners requires awareness that the Bible often has lost its meaning, or its relevance, or both.

Johnston notes:

For many postmodern listeners the message of Bible has no meaning, and they don't understand it. For others the message of the Bible has no relevance and bears no importance. Many listeners feel as if the Bible has nothing substantial to say to people living in our time; for some the message of the Bible has neither meaning nor relevance. The role of the preacher is to supply both meaning and relevance to people who initially do not understand the message or perceive its need.⁶³

Another complication of communicating with postmodern listeners is the old adage "they don't care what you know until they know that you care" is alive and well. In the modern era the question "is it true" often took precedence. To the postmodern listener the concern is more about whether the message seems useful to what they are experiencing at a given moment in time.⁶⁴ The preacher must be aware of the real world, every day circumstances of the listener's lives and be perceived by the listener's as genuinely caring about them. Understanding their struggles and creating a sense that the preacher also is struggling is critical to postmodern listener's ability to hear what God is saying to them.

⁶³ Johnston, 64.

⁶⁴ Johnston, 75.

Johnston notes that postmodern listeners are more open to exploring ideas and ways of looking at the world that are contrary to the traditional Christian understanding.⁶⁵ Since all truth is equally valid for the post-modern hearer the preacher must engage in respectful dialogue and develop his or her apologetic skills to gain a hearing. Simply conveying information about the Bible does not go very far. The preacher has to connect the ideas of the Bible to circumstances and experiences in the listeners' lives that are meaningful in such a way that seems useful to them. Because postmodernism promotes an individualistic and ego-centric worldview listeners are attracted to messages that promote their personal growth and development.

A particular difficulty arises for preachers who are committed to the authority of the Bible as God's very own Word. The postmodern audience is suspicious of authority.⁶⁶ Therefore insisting on the inerrancy of Scripture as a starting point for believing the Bible becomes an obstacle. Preachers should shift his or her attention from protecting the Bible to getting people to examine what the Bible says about the issue of their lives. This does not mean the preacher gives up the authority of Scripture as he or she expounds it, but rather trusts that the listeners will come to the conclusion that it must be God's own word over time. Showing our struggles, doubts, and uncertainty invites listeners to think through the text with us. A narrow dogmatism is an automatic dead end with postmodern listeners.⁶⁷

In spite of all the challenges the postmodern audience presents the opportunity to bring God's word into the lives of people is tremendous. Postmodernism has created an

⁶⁵ Johnston, 77-86.

⁶⁶ Johnston, 87-118.

⁶⁷ Johnston, 93.

atmosphere of uncertainty on the one hand and cynicism on the other. Into this vacuum the message of hope in God's love for us in Christ. Graham Johnston concludes,

We walk and move among people who long to embrace what really matters. What are the things of life that count? A clear advantage for preaching in the postmodern times is the disillusionment with life. Dorothy Sayers observes, "In the world it is called Tolerance, but in hell it is called Despair. ... the sin that believes in nothing, cares for nothing, seeks to know nothing, interferes with nothing, enjoys nothing, hates nothing, finds purpose in nothing, lives for nothing, and remains alive because there is nothing for which it will die."⁶⁸

Two successful preachers who have entered the fray to communicate effectively in our postmodern era are Andy Stanley and Timothy Keller.

Andy Stanley is the pastor of North Point Community Church in the Atlanta, Georgia area. He has been highly effective in gathering large numbers of unchurched people from the culture that has become less and less interested in the Bible, in the Church, and what Christianity has to say about life. Stanley's stated goal is to hold the attention and engage listeners who are predisposed to dismiss or ignore the message of the Bible. Our goal Stanley writes, "the thing that wakes us up in the morning and keeps us awake at night—is when one of our attendees takes a risk and invites a friend who is far from God, and that friend shows up, is moved, and chooses to return the following weekend."⁶⁹ Since he is trying to reach people from very diverse backgrounds who do not necessarily share his worldview or theology Stanley argues that the common ground to reach his listeners is "common experiences and emotions."⁷⁰

Stanley offers six useful guidelines in developing preaching that connects with listeners. First, the preacher should acknowledge that there are unbelieving, unchurched, skeptical people in the audience and help put them at ease recognizing their insecurities

⁶⁸ Johnston, 137.

⁶⁹ Andy Stanley, *Deep and Wide* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2012), 197.

⁷⁰ Stanley, 202.

and doubts in a non-threatening way. The preacher is trying to communicate that we are more alike than we are different. Second, the preacher has to find a point of common interest with the audience that is rooted in real life experience. He makes a powerful observation:

Contrary to what you might have been told, or otherwise believe, we have far more in common with unchurched people than we have differences. We all worry about the same things. None of us feels like we have enough money. Every married couple faces similar challenges. We all wonder what happens when we die. Parents are concerned about their children's friends. We all need friends. We all face overwhelming temptations. We all have regrets we don't know what to do with. We've all been hurt. We struggle to forgive. We are plagued by guilt. Honestly I can't think of a single uniquely "Christian" problem.⁷¹

Thirdly, the preacher must understand the Bible is intimidating to people who have never read or know little about it. Therefore, the preacher ought to stick with one passage in his preaching and not go running around the Scripture pulling verses to speak to a specific topic. Fourthly, listeners who are skeptical or have doubts will listen more carefully if you give them permission not to believe. Using phrases like, "If you aren't a Christian, you are off the hook today," or, "If you aren't a follower of Jesus, then you are not accountable for what we are about to read. You get a pass."⁷² Fifth, do not preach in such a way as to require faith in the infallibility of Scripture as a necessary precursor to following Jesus. Help people understand that what's so amazing about the Bible is that it was written by 40 different authors over a period of 1500 years and they all tell one story. It's not helpful therefore to refer to the Bible as a book. It diminishes the remarkable nature of the Bible. It is better to cite authors, specific people who wrote the manuscripts of the Bible, than to quote the "the Bible." Our culture is biblically illiterate so stop assuming that people know anything about it. And sixth, it is preferable to acknowledge

⁷¹ Stanley, 240.

⁷² Stanley, 243.

the supernatural occurrences of the Bible as odd, even to believers. It is possible to avoid creating an unnecessary tension between faith and science. We don't have to be afraid of people who are pursuing natural cause explanations of things. Becoming a follower of Jesus isn't about believing in supernatural miracles first. It's about meeting the one who predicted his own death and resurrection and then did it. You can admit to people that you believe supernatural things in the Bible because Jesus did and you're with him – the one who rose from the dead.

Timothy Keller is also highly effective in reaching listeners in the current cultural climate. Keller is the pastor of Redeemer Presbyterian Church in New York City. He is noted for his ability to communicate with young, skeptical, sophisticated listeners in the urban environment. Keller disagrees with Stanley's premise that the preacher needs to adapt to the culture in order to communicate the truth of Scripture by prioritizing the experiences and emotions of the audience. The question Keller poses is whether the preacher should change to meet the demands of this culture or challenge it. He comes down on the side of challenging it.⁷³

Keller argues that contextualization is the missiological process of adapting the message in order to be heard in a particular cultural setting.⁷⁴ Effective contextualization finds things in the culture that can be affirmed and then uncovers a point of contradiction that opens the way to introduce the gospel. Keller also offers six preaching practices to reaching a culture. First, Keller states that the use of vocabulary must be carefully considered in view of the current cultural audience. Rich theological terms have to be explained and restated in ways more accessible to the listeners. Words that have meaning

⁷³ Timothy Keller, *Preaching: Communicating Faith in an Age of Skepticism* (New York: Viking, 2015), 95-96.

⁷⁴ Keller, 99-103.

to those with theological background must be repackaged to be heard by contemporary listeners. In addition catch phrases and church lingo are markers that create boundaries where the listener is either an insider who talks like that or an outsider who mocks it. Preachers also need to be very careful about disparaging other Christians who believe differently and even other religions. Today's listeners are hyper-sensitive to the divisive nature of religion and respond negatively to caricatures or marginalization of others. Without denying one's distinctiveness it is necessary to affirm one's identity in the larger context of the Body of Christ and the human community. Second, Biblical concepts must be illustrated by ideas that come from outside the mainstream the Christian context. When listeners begin to see that problems like sin and evil are wrestled with and spoken of by secularists and atheists alike they begin to sense at least that the Bible isn't just making these things up and inflicting them on humanity but rather speaks similarly to the struggle from a different set of presuppositions. Listeners can begin to "hear" the Bible in an engaging way that may even lead to acknowledging its authority on the issues. Third, like Stanley, Keller encourages recognition of doubters and skeptics in the audience. Messages are often dismissive or oblivious to the questions people have about the Bible, Christianity, morality, and the Church. Even if there are none present in the room the members present are having to face them daily in their personal experience. Speaking in a way that acknowledges their doubts and concerns gives them permission to listen more thoughtfully and equips members to respond in everyday circumstances. The primary method of addressing doubts is to acknowledge the legitimacy of a person's question, find a point of contact, and then offer a reasonable and respectful confrontation for them to consider. Fourth, baseline cultural narratives are themes that are uncritically accepted

as true. They are thought to be beyond argument. “Everyone has the right to their own opinion” or “You have to be yourself” are two of many examples. The preacher needs to be able to describe them sympathetically and address them thoughtfully from a biblical perspective. Fifth, the gospel is truly good news that offers genuine relief to the issues in the culture. The preacher needs to speak the gospel winsomely to the sore spots in people’s experience. And finally, sixth, preachers often fail to recognize that the gospel is not only the power to convert the unbeliever but to transform the believer more and more into the image of Christ. Therefore the gospel can at the same time call the unbeliever to faith and equip the believer to live faithfully as a follower of Christ. “When the preacher solves Christians’ problems with the gospel—not by calling them to try harder but by pointing them to deeper faith in Christ’s salvation—then believers are being edified and nonbelievers are hearing the gospel, all at the same time.”⁷⁵

Stanley and Keller, while offering different approaches to audience analysis, provide helpful insights to assist the preacher in developing his skills for effective communication. In the final analysis the critical component to understanding the listeners is spending time with them individually and in groups. Pastoral care and home visitation are the bread and butter of knowing the people the preacher speaks to week in and week out. Being well read, understanding demographics, interpreting the culture, being in touch with current events all converge in the moments when the pastor sits down with a member and listens to their hopes and dreams and suffering. Every board meeting and Bible study becomes a moment of analysis in preparation for the next Sunday’s sermon. The more time a preacher spends with those who listen to his sermons, consciously aware

⁷⁵ Keller, 102-120.

that he is doing sermon preparation all the time, the more effectively he will communicate the gospel of Jesus Christ.

Teaching Preaching

The focus of my thesis-project is mentoring vicars during their vicarage to help them develop their skills in audience analysis in order to enhance their effectiveness in relating their sermons to the real life circumstances of their listeners. Teaching is the process of imparting knowledge or skills to someone that enables the learner to think critically about a subject, perform an action, or experience a feeling. Teaching is a discipline that requires understanding, curiosity, and patience. While some have disparaged the profession with the old saw, “those who cannot ‘do’, teach,” suggesting that teachers are those who cannot make it in the real world, the truth is that good teachers are rare and precious. Teachers combine in-depth knowledge of their subject, genuine passion and skills for transmitting what they know to their students, and evaluating the student’s acquisition of the lesson being taught. In this section I will first survey characteristic and practices of the best teachers, then I will examine what teachers of preaching have identified as core content for the practice of preaching, thirdly the role of practicing preaching, and finally some methods of assessment.

Identifying and then describing great teaching is a monumental task. Ken Bain and a small group of educators conducted a fifteen-year study that included nearly one hundred college teachers from a broad spectrum of educational institutions and fields of study. His observations and conclusions in *What the Best College Teachers Do* were challenging and instructive as I began to think about how to effectively mentor vicars in their preaching. Six broad conclusions were drawn from the research:

1. “Outstanding teachers knew their subjects extremely well.”⁷⁶
2. Exceptional teachers treated their classroom teaching as important as their research and scholarship. They designed lessons based on student learning objectives rather than what the teacher will do.
3. The best teachers expect “more” by designing objectives that go beyond the classroom and are tied to the kind of “thinking and acting expected for life.”⁷⁷
4. The best teacher create a “natural critical learning environment” in which students are engaged in meaningful tasks and challenged to grapple with ideas often in collaboration with others. Students are allowed to “try, fail, and receive feedback from expert learners.”⁷⁸
5. “Highly effective teachers tend to reflect a strong trust in students.”⁷⁹ They engage in open and honest discussions about their own curiosity about life. They treat students like fellow human beings.
6. The best teachers used student evaluation to assess their own efforts and make adjustments to their teaching.

Teaching requires an understanding of how learning occurs. Knowledge is not simply the transfer of information. Knowledge is constructed by the learner using his or her existing mental models of reality. Great teachers guide their students to build new mental models by confronting them with situations in which their existing model will not work. The best teachers want their students to learn the material in the context of wrestling with the problems and issues related to the material. Learning has occurred when the process

⁷⁶ Ken Bain, *What the Best College Teachers Do* (Cambridge and London: Harvard University, 2004), 15.

⁷⁷ Bain, 18.

⁷⁸ Bain, 18.

⁷⁹ Bain, 18.

has influenced the way the student thinks, acts, or feels. Extrinsic motivators damage intrinsic motivation. Words of encouragement and praise stimulate interest, or at least keep it from disappearing. If people believe that others are trying to control them their motivation and performance decreases.

Furthermore, people with a fixed sense of intelligence avoid situations where learning actually takes place—struggling, grappling, and making mistakes. Students who believe they can become more intelligent by learning—a “mastery orientation”—work to increase their own competence not to win rewards. Teachers who move students toward setting their own learning goals and a mastery orientation are the most effective.⁸⁰ They give students control over their own learning. They offer non-judgmental feedback. They encourage collaboration and cooperation rather than competition against other students.

Bain notes, “Learning doesn’t just affect what you know; it can transform how you understand the nature of knowing.”⁸¹ One study identified four categories of learning. “Received knowers” view truth as something to be taken in from the outside, sometimes known as the “banking model” because the teachers deposit the correct answers in the student’s heads. As students discover that experts disagree some become “subjective knowers” by deciding that all truth is a matter of opinion. “Procedural knowers” learn how to play the game of figuring out what a teacher wants and delivering it but without any substantial influence on the way that they think, act, or feel. At the highest level of learning, called “commitment,” students become “independent, critical, and creative thinkers, valuing the ideas and ways of thinking to which they are exposed and consciously and consistently trying to use them. They become aware of their own

⁸⁰ Bain, 34-36.

⁸¹ Bain, 42.

thinking and learn to correct it as they go.”⁸² The most successful teachers strive for the highest level of learning from their students. They are not content with received knowers—the banking model of learning.

The implications of this understanding of learning informs the way a mentor approaches his vicar in helping him grow as a preacher. Vicars are coming out of an academic environment in which some will have reached a mastery orientation toward their learning and be eager to apply what they have learned in a real-time setting. Others however arrive with an extrinsic motivation of having to complete the vicarage in order to graduate and really start preaching. The supervisor will have to discern what type of learner he has been assigned and attempt to meet him at that place with goal to instill a lifelong love for learning to be a better preacher.

The best teachers focus on what students will learn rather than what the teacher will do.⁸³ They focus on successful learning environments and learning as a serious intellectual or even artistic act. To accomplish that the best teachers plan around what skills, abilities, or qualities they want students to develop and how they can encourage students to be interested in the big questions and the abilities needed to answer them. They see their goal as helping students discover the beauty and the joy of learning. The biggest task is not transfer of information but instilling the ability to think – to use information and arrive at reasonable conclusions. Often the best teachers seek to confront students with conflicting problems and truth claims to encourage them to wrestle with the issues involved. The goal is helping students construct their own understanding.

⁸² Bain, 43.

⁸³ Bain, 48-67.

The vicarage year provides an opportunity for mentors to engage in this type of teaching. The challenge is to figure out methodologies that draw the student into thinking critically about the task of preaching. Ideally the mentor would guide the student to define a specific goal for a sermon related to the skills of preparing and delivering the message that the student would take ownership of and subsequently evaluate whether it was achieved. In this way the student would begin to construct a healthy process for preaching to be implemented and enhanced for the rest of his life.

The best teachers appreciate the individual value of each student and have great faith in the students' ability to achieve.⁸⁴ They combine high standards, strong trust in the students' ability to meet those standards and intellectual excitement and curiosity rather than worry and doubt over "making the grade." The best teachers believe that human beings are capable of change and that change requires personal and intellectual development not just the accumulation of information.⁸⁵ The best teachers seek to develop critical thinking skills—habits of the mind to promote intellectual growth.⁸⁶ Alongside this intellectual development the best teachers also recognize the need for personal growth—developing a deeper sense of self and what it means to be human. The best teachers do not assume a position of power. Successful teachers demonstrated trust and it affected every encounter with their students. They project an attitude of being fellow travelers with students in pursuit of the prize and do not act superior to students.⁸⁷

The personal relationship between the mentor and the vicar is the most powerful teaching tool the supervisor has at his disposal. Supervisors must seek the positives in

⁸⁴ Bain, 79.

⁸⁵ Bain, 80.

⁸⁶ Bain, 85.

⁸⁷ Bain, 140.

their vicar's personality and ability and seek to build on that. Criticism can only be received within the context of a relationship of trust.

No one method of teaching is sufficient to reach all students. But there are principles that lead to successful learning. The first principle is the creation of a natural critical learning environment. The first step is developing intriguing questions and tasks that require students to inquire and offering them feedback on their effort so they will keep trying until they arrive at satisfying answers. Students need to be guided to understand why the question is significant. This process moves students to higher level thinking—compare, apply, evaluate, analyze, and synthesize—not just listen and remember. The goal whenever possible is to help students answer the question for themselves. In a natural critical learning environment students leave asking, “What is the next question?” Where do we go from here? Great teachers have the ability to talk engagingly and to prompt students to talk. Getting students to talk is a critical part of their learning.

The vicarage is not only about developing preaching skills. It is intended to develop the whole person as a pastor. Some mentors will naturally be more interested and gifted in areas of ministry other than preaching. However, the preaching task ought to take a primary place in the supervisor's agenda for the vicar. Preaching is the place where all other aspects of pastoral ministry converge. Behind every conversation about administration, stewardship, counseling, parish education is an opportunity for the student to discover what this congregation needs to hear as he prepares his next sermon. For example the mentor can ask questions about how the intern's experience at the youth event might inform his application of the next sermon.

Observations of Core Content for Teaching Preaching

Sidney Greidanus made the observation in his paper “Teaching First-Year Preaching” that most PhD’s and ThD’s have never taken a course in basic pedagogy.⁸⁸ If that’s true of seminary professors it is likely true of most supervisors overseeing vicars. Greidanus’ encouragement applies equally to supervisors: keep learning about learning. The qualities of being a great teacher are daunting to say the least, but the supervisor must recognize the powerful role he has in the formation of a pastor as a preacher. Awareness and attentiveness to the best practices can only serve to enhance his effectiveness.

Next let’s explore some of the core competencies of the preaching task that can be developed during the vicarage year. Adrian Lane quotes 2 Timothy 2:2 as the basis for his argument that all preachers should be trainers of future preachers and teachers of the word. He seeks to identify core competencies necessary for such training to occur. Preachers do not naturally think of themselves as trainers of other preachers. Preachers assert everything from inadequacy for the task to genuine humility of being unqualified as a preacher themselves to imagine passing what they know on to another. They viewed their learning to preach as an end in itself not an ongoing process. Lane identifies a “homiletical quadrilateral”⁸⁹ as the foundation for training future preachers. The four components that work in continuous relationship to each other are Word → Preacher → Sermon → Congregation. All preaching begins with the Word rightly understood in its

⁸⁸ Sidney Greidanus. “Teaching First-Year Preaching”, (paper presented at the 3rd annual meeting of the Evangelical Homiletics Society, Vancouver, BC, October 16-18, 2003), accessed September 29, 2016, http://ehomiletics.com/files/papers/ehs_papers_2003.pdf.

⁸⁹ Adrian Lane. “Training the Trainers of Tomorrow’s Preachers: Towards a Transferable Homiletical Pedagogy,” *The Journal of the Evangelical Homiletics Society* 9, no. 2 (September 2009): 18, accessed September 29, 2016, http://ehomiletics.com/files/journals/jehs_09-2_sep_2009.pdf.

context and within the orthodox understanding of the faith. Preachers begin to transfer the ability to preach to future preachers when they rightly interpret the Scripture for faith and life. The preacher is not a neutral transmitter of knowledge about God and his Word. The character of the preacher enhances or detracts and destroys the message he/she preaches. A theologically sound, rhetorically brilliant sermon is lost if the preacher himself/herself does not love God with all his/her heart, soul, mind, and strength. The sermon is delivered to a particular group of people, a congregation, with its own unique character and cultural setting. For the preacher to effectively communicate God's word he must know his audience and the struggles they experience living in their unique place and time in the world. For a trainer to train others within the homiletical quadrangle a preacher needs certain core competencies. Some core competencies identified are prayerfulness, self-awareness, understanding and acceptance, gift recognition, ability to train character, self-revelation skills, ability to train theological thinking, communication skills, developing creativity, using training contexts optimally, and training others to train.⁹⁰ Teaching others to preach will require a diligent prayer life for oneself, the student, and the process of learning.

Once again the task of supervising a vicar seems overwhelming. However the "homiletical quadrangle" suggestion provides a framework for the supervisor to think about his mentoring task. The fourth side of the quadrangle, "Congregation", is the narrow focus of this project. The student will have developed skills in handling the Word through his course work at the seminary. His identity as a preacher will have been largely shaped by his life experience prior to the vicarage. He/she will have written a few sermons for the classroom with perhaps a few other opportunities in a fieldwork setting

⁹⁰ Lane, 22-30.

or at his/her home congregation. The vicarage however, will be his first prolonged exposure to preaching to a single group of people over an extended period of time. The critical component of connecting with the listeners at a real-life, daily-experience level can be developed on the vicarage by guiding the student to raise his awareness of all his various interactions with the congregation as an important part of his sermon preparation.

The Power of Practice in Preaching

A third unique dynamic of teaching preaching during the vicarage year is the sustained practice of preaching over the course of the vicarage. Unlike sermons prepared for the classroom the vicarage is not a “one and done” assignment. Ervin Stutzman observed in a paper delivered to the Evangelical Homiletics Society that formal education of clergy has evolved into a more and more professional process at seminaries that focus primarily on cognitive dimensions of learning. In contrast he notes, “Training for preachers, and for the work of clergy as a whole, is historically rooted in apprenticeship. Through most of the centuries since the early church, preachers learned their craft by working alongside older or more accomplished preachers.”⁹¹ Stutzman cites a study sponsored by the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching that identified four pedagogies that were foundational in clergy education: “*interpretation, formation, contextualization* and *performance*.” Interpretation is the focus on interpreting “texts, situations, and relationships.” Formation is the intentional development of the student’s character. Contextualization is learning how to adapt the truth of Scripture to speak to the unique aspects of a particular audience. Performance is the ability to deliver a sermon

⁹¹ Ervin R. Stutzman, “Toward Excellence in Equipping Preachers: Four Foci for Classroom Instruction” (paper presented at the 6th annual meeting of the Evangelical Homiletics Society, South Hamilton, Massachusetts, October 12-14, 2006). accessed September 29, 2016, http://ehomiletics.com/files/papers/ehs_papers_2006.pdf.

effectively to the listeners in an engaging way. Stutzman advocates coaching as the best pedagogical method for developing all four pedagogies in the context of preaching. Since preaching is performed publically the performance element becomes the platform upon which interpretation, formation, and contextualization are developed. The analogy of other performance disciplines—music, dance, athletics—is a powerful illustration of the use of coaching as a primary means of developing preachers. Coaching is a unique teaching strategy based on improving performance by practicing an activity until it is mastered. Ervin Stutzman states:

At its heart, coaching methodology requires the following elements – 1) providing clarity about the requirements of performance (often through modeling), 2) observing the student’s performance, 3) giving feedback about the performance with suggestions for improvement, then 4) observing the revised performance. Performance, coaching feedback, and adapted performance function sequentially in a loop that may be repeated endlessly until the student has achieved the goal behavior. Most world-class professional performers (whether in sports or entertainment) work through such coaching cycles (with increasingly competent coaches) for twenty years before reaching international acclaim. Neither worldly acclaim nor world-class status are appropriate goals for preachers, but preachers who seek to give their best to Christ and his kingdom should invest sincere efforts to master their craft.⁹²

The vicarage year is an ideal opportunity for a coaching model to be employed.

The Importance of Assessment

The final section of the review of the literature on teaching preaching will consider methods of assessment as they relate to the supervision of a vicar. In his study of the best practices of highly effective college teachers Ken Bain notes that evaluations are part of the learning process not a system of rating or ranking students. The best teachers are more interested in encouraging development than in identifying abilities. Their fundamental question is: “What kind of intellectual and personal development do I

⁹² Stutzman, 5.

want my students to enjoy in this class, and what evidence might I collect about the nature and progress of their development.”⁹³ Assessment and evaluation are the tools the mentor uses to refine and improve his guidance of the vicar to advance their development as a preacher.

Evaluating preaching is a very stressful experience for the vicar. The development and delivery of a sermon represents a personal investment of time, energy, thought, and emotions. Public speaking in general and preaching in particular puts the speaker in a highly vulnerable position. Personal identity and self-esteem are at risk. Every educator I consulted on this topic agreed: encourage, encourage, encourage! Critical evaluation—especially right after preaching can be debilitating. Equally important is the need to offer specific feedback. Generalizations such as “good work” or “nice job” do not provide any opportunity for the vicar to learn from their experience and grow. After a sermon has been preached it is helpful to discuss it before offering written evaluation. Asking the student to do some self-assessment—what did you feel were some strong points in your sermon—followed by—what would you do differently—provides a platform for the mentor to offer specific encouragement and positive critique. After this verbal review a written evaluation objectifies the direction for improvement. Sidney Greidanus, a veteran of teaching preaching in the classroom gives this advice:

On my written evaluation of the first sermon I include some specific goals for improving the second sermon; e.g., more and better eye contact, broader gestures, clearer references to and quotations of the biblical text, clearer communication of the main points, more illustrations, a conclusion that clinches the goal and then stops, etc. Almost every student showed great improvement in composing and delivering the second sermon.⁹⁴

⁹³ Bain, 153.

⁹⁴ Greidanus, “Teaching First-Year Preaching,” 3.

Developing effective evaluation questions and forms is challenging. The four pedagogies—interpretation, formation, contextualization, and performance—identified in the research by Charles Foster, et al. in their book *Educating Clergy* provides a useful foundation. Ervin Stutzman presented a series of questions based on that research that help inform the development of both verbal and written evaluations. “I suggest the following questions as a means by which an instructor might evaluate or produce a list of criteria for preaching, based on the four pedagogies.”

Interpretation.

- To what extent was the purpose/content of the sermon faithful to the chosen text, the whole of scripture and/or the Christian tradition?
- In what ways did the public presentation of the message utilize aural and visual elements to provide nuances of interpretation beyond the limits of a written text?

Formation.

- In what way(s) did the speaker identify with the audience?
- What did the speaker reveal of himself/herself in the message that the audience would not know otherwise?
- To what extent did the preacher seem to be personally moved by the message?
- What was the level of consistency between the “walk” and the “talk” – the words that were spoken and what is known of the preacher’s character and lifestyle?
- To what extent did the preacher seem to be aware of the effect of the message on the audience while it was being preached?

Contextualization.

- In what ways did the speaker build a bridge from the biblical text to the contemporary audience?

Performance.

- To what extent did the organization of the sermon provide a helpful flow of thought for the audience to grasp?
- How well did the grammar and vocabulary of the sermon fit the audience and occasion?
- What elements of the presentation, if any, seemed extraneous or distracting to the main message?
- In what ways did the preacher’s display of emotion contribute to or distract from the message?

- To what extent did the speaker utilize variances in the elements of speech such as rate, pitch, volume and quality to provide nuanced emphasis to the message? ⁹⁵

Conclusion

Preaching is a complex communicative event requiring numerous skills and abilities. Chief among them is the preacher's awareness of the real life circumstances of the listeners. Throughout this chapter I have explored the long history of audience analysis as a critical part of communication from the birthplace of rhetoric in ancient Greek practice through modern public speaking to the narrow application in our current cultural setting. The goal of this thesis-project is to identify teaching and mentoring contexts to improve a supervisor's effectiveness in guiding vicars to improve their analysis of their listeners in order to bring the Word of God to bear more effectively on their lives so that the Spirit of God who works through the Word might transform their lives. In the next chapter I will explain the research project I conducted to test these teaching/mentoring methodologies.

⁹⁵ Stutzman, 6-7.

CHAPTER FOUR

PROJECT DESIGN

Introduction

The work of connecting preaching to the real-life circumstances of listeners requires the promised presence of the Holy Spirit. That said the preacher still has the responsibility to diligently strive to craft and deliver a sermon that does not inhibit the Spirit's work. In seminary classrooms students are taught the importance of exegetical study of the text, doctrinal interpretation, and homiletical principles for sermon preparation. Learning to take what is discovered in the Biblical text and apply it effectively to the lives of the listeners is a skill developed through practice. The literature reviewed in Chapter Three established audience analysis as a critical component of effective public speaking in general, and preaching in particular. The purpose of this chapter is to describe the project I developed to help vicars during their vicarage year learn and implement audience analysis skills to enhance the effectiveness of their preaching. The results of this project will enable me and perhaps other mentors of preachers in training to guide students more effectively in writing and delivering sermons that connect to the real-life circumstances of the listeners.

Project Purpose

As a mentor of vicars from Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, MO, I wanted to explore ways of helping students preach sermons that nourish the listeners in their faith in

Jesus Christ and motivate them to live out that faith in their everyday lives.¹ While common sense and the long history of rhetoric, including homiletics, reveal the importance of knowing the audience, the primary focus of my project was mentoring vicars to develop and use the skills of audience analysis in their sermons. Therefore the research question and hypothesis were:

Research Question: How can supervisors effectively mentor vicars in audience analysis during their vicarage so they better impact the listeners' real-life circumstances with the proclamation of God's Word?

Hypothesis: Intentional mentoring by a vicarage supervisor in the area of audience analysis will enhance the vicar's ability to connect his preaching to the real-life circumstances of the listener.

Methodology

My project consisted of four parts: first, I assessed the current instruction in homiletics provided at Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, MO for the vicars I supervise; second, I created a sermon evaluation tool and recruited evaluators from my congregation, who used it to evaluate six sermons preached by the vicar; third, I designed and implemented instructions for my vicars in audience analysis; fourth I reviewed the results of the evaluations for the vicar's sermon.

Assessment of Homiletic Instruction

The first part of my project was an assessment and analysis of the homiletic curriculum at Concordia Seminary in St. Louis, MO. It was important for me to gain a

¹ The Lutheran Church Missouri Synod does not ordain women into the office of the public ministry. Although the language of this chapter is masculine I am not attempting to make a theological judgment in this thesis-project but rather reflecting the context in which the project was conducted.

general understanding of what the vicars I supervise are receiving in their seminary classroom instruction in order to more effectively build on that foundation to develop the student's preaching during his vicarage. I contacted Dr. Glenn Nielsen at Concordia Seminary. He is a professor of homiletics and the Director of Vicarage. Dr. Nielsen helped facilitate my contact with two other homiletics professors at Concordia, Dr. David Schmitt and Dr. Todd Jones. I reviewed the seminary's homiletics syllabi from Nielsen, Schmitt and Jones. I examined their course outlines and the required reading they assigned to familiarize myself with the content of their courses. I traveled to St. Louis and conducted one-hour interviews with each professor. Dr. Nielsen graciously arranged the annual Vicarage Supervisors Conference around the topic of mentoring vicars in their preaching. As part of the conference I was allowed to act as facilitator for two panel discussions. The first panel discussion was with three pastors who supervise vicars. The second panel discussion was with three students who had recently completed their vicarage. The primary purpose of these panel discussions was to gain insight into methods of mentoring being provided by supervisors and the impact that mentoring had on students. I asked the supervisors questions about their interactions with their vicars in both the sermon preparation process and post-delivery. I asked similar questions of the students but was also interested to discover what they found most helpful from their mentors.

I also conducted a survey of vicarage supervisors to determine their awareness and intentionality in their mentoring of vicars in audience analysis. I designed the survey using Google Forms and distributed it by e-mail. The survey consisted of simple biographical information about the respondent; nine statements about their mentoring

methods in general; and three specific statements about audience analysis: “I usually engage the vicar in some audience analysis as part of his sermon preparation (i.e. help him think about specific age groups, socio-economic status, or life circumstances in the congregation)” (Q 10); “I discuss the demographic make-up of the local community with the vicar” (Q 11); and “I familiarize the vicar with the history of the congregation” (Q12).² I used a 1-5 Likert scale survey with the “1” response representing “never” and the “5” response representing “always.” The survey was sent from the Vicarage Director’s office of each of our two seminaries to eighty-seven Masters of Divinity vicarage supervisors.

The results of this survey revealed that the vast majority of vicarage supervisors familiarize the vicars with basic components of audience analysis.³ 85-90% discuss community and congregational demographics and engage the vicar in conversation about specific circumstances in the lives of the listeners.

Table 2: Vicarage Supervisor Audience Analysis Questions

	# of Respondents	Negative Response (1-2)	Neutral (3)	Positive Response (4-5)	% Positive
Q10	48	4	2	41	85%
Q 11	48	1	4	43	90%
Q 12	48	1	4	43	90%

While the survey indicates an awareness of audience analysis in sermon preparation, my review of the homiletics curriculum and my interviews with the professors indicated that given the introductory nature of the first two courses in preaching given before vicarage, in-depth instruction in audience analysis could not be provided in the classroom. In the panel discussions with the supervisors about mentoring vicars in sermon preparation

² Appendix F. Vicarage supervisor survey.

³ Appendix G. Vicarage supervisor survey results.

references to audience analysis were only general in nature. Likewise, in the panel discussions with the returning vicars audience analysis was more of a natural consequence of spending time with the congregation than an intentional part of their sermon preparation. Therefore, I confirmed the need for more specific instruction in audience analysis and my research question: How can supervisors effectively mentor vicars in audience analysis during their vicarage so the students better impact the listeners' real-life circumstances with the proclamation of God's Word?

Assessment Tool and Evaluators

The second part of my project was creating a sermon evaluation tool and choosing evaluators from the congregation to evaluate six sermons delivered by my vicar.⁴ The purpose of this component of my project design was to provide me with feedback on the effectiveness of the instruction I was giving in audience analysis.

The first sermon the evaluators critiqued was prior to any of my instruction given to the vicar. Each subsequent sermon was evaluated after I gave instruction in audience analysis. The survey tool that I designed to evaluate the vicar's sermons consisted of fifteen statements. I created it using Google Forms and distributed it by e-mail to the participants in the study. I used a Likert scale survey and divided the survey into two parts. The first part contained four questions about the listener's personal interaction with the vicar prior to evaluating his sermon. The second part of the survey had eleven statements regarding the listener's experience during the vicar's sermon.

I recruited twenty members to participate in the study. I chose the evaluators to get a mix of ages and genders.

⁴ Appendix I. Vicar sermon evaluation form.

Table 3: Age and Gender of Evaluators

	Age	Gender
1	76	M
2	74	F
3	70	F
4	69	M
5	65	M
6	51	F
7	50	M
8	49	M
9	49	F
10	48	M
11	45	F
12	43	F
13	35	F
14	35	M
15	30	F
16	30	M
17	22	M
18	21	M
19	17	F
20	17	M

To accommodate the evaluators' schedules they had the options to be present in the sanctuary when the sermon was delivered, watch it live online, or watch a recording of it stored on the church's website. The six sermons were delivered between August 21, 2016 and February 5, 2017.

Audience Analysis Instruction

The third part of my project involved designing instructional modules in the areas of audience analysis to equip vicars with skills to gain understanding of his listeners and incorporate that understanding into his sermon preparation. Based on the research I did in chapter 3, I decided to develop five specific modules each designed to highlight different

aspects of audience analysis. The topics for these modules began with broad categories of evaluating the community and congregation and narrowed to specific individuals and their circumstances.

Table 4: Instructional Module Topics

Instructional Module Topics:
Community Demographic Analysis
Congregational History
Ministry Meetings of the Congregation
Homebound and Hospital Visitation
Specific Pastoral Interactions

These modules are only a sampling of many ways of achieving the learning goal of assisting a preacher in acquiring audience analysis skills. The modules included basic instruction in a specific area of audience analysis, discussions to explore the application of the learning to sermon preparation, an activity to reflect on the learning, and the creation of a specific sermon application based on the learning. The modules were designed using a standard lesson plan format:

Table 5: Lesson Plan Outline

Lesson Plan Format	Description
1. Learning Goal	Broad goal for the entire project. Same for each module.
2. Module objective	Specific focus of each module.
3. Learning Strategies	Specific methods used for students to understand the objective and goal.
4. Activities	Specific method students will use to apply the learning.

Module 1: Community Demographic Analysis

Demographics are the measurable characteristics of a given population such as nationality, religious and political affiliation, education level, ethnicity, economic status, types of employment, etc. Every congregation is located in a unique community.

Awareness of both community and congregational demographics helps the preacher gain a broad understanding of the people who are (and are not) sitting in the pews on Sunday morning.

Table 6: Demographics Lesson Plan

1. Learning Goal	<p>The vicar will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Explain the importance of audience analysis for preaching that connects to the real-life circumstances of his listeners. b. Demonstrate an intentional habit of using audience analysis as part of his regular sermon preparation regimen. c. Design sermons that incorporate his audience analysis learning in the application of his sermon to the real-life circumstances of his listeners.
2. Module Objectives	<p>The vicar will</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Summarize the demographic statistics for the community. b. Summarize the demographic statistics for the congregation. c. Compare the demographic statistics for the community with the demographic statistics of the congregation.
3. Learning Strategies	<p>The vicar will</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Complete a demographic analysis worksheet for the community and the congregation. b. Observe the congregation on Sunday morning and engage with those in attendance before and after services. c. Observe the neighborhood surrounding the church by walking around in it. d. Observe the community at the local mall. e. Engage at least two people in conversation at a popular local hangout. f. Read Chapter 4, "Preaching Christ to the Culture" and Chapter 5, "Preaching and the (Late) Modern Mind" in <i>Preaching: Communicating Faith in an Age of Skepticism</i> by Timothy Keller.
4. Activities	<p>The vicar will</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Discuss his findings and experiences with his supervisor. b. Write a paragraph summary of his initial observations of the community and the congregation. c. Demonstrate his awareness of the demographics of the community in his second sermon by referencing some aspect of his learning in the study of the sermon text, an illustration, or an application.

Module 2: Congregational History

The history of a congregation is a powerful resource for understanding the listeners in the pew. Learning the history of the congregation not only helps prevent a preacher from stepping on land mines of past battles that have been fought, but it also recognizes and honors God's unique work among this group of people over the years. By knowing the congregation's history the preacher can bring God's Word to bear on the life of the congregation.

Table 7: Congregational History Lesson Plan

1. Learning Goal	<p>The vicar will:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">Explain the importance of audience analysis for preaching that connects to the real-life circumstances of his listeners.Demonstrate an intentional habit of using audience analysis as part of his regular sermon preparation regimen.Design sermons that incorporate his audience analysis learning in the application of his sermon to the real-life circumstances of his listeners.
2. Module Objectives	<p>The vicar will</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">Summarize the basic history of the congregation.Identify the founding families in the congregation.
3. Learning Strategies	<p>The vicar will</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">Review the four-part video created for the 100th Anniversary of the congregation.Examine the pictorial history display in the entry area of the church.⁵Read any written history of the congregation.Visit one of the patriarchs or matriarchs of the congregation and inquire about their memories of life in the congregation.
4. Activities	<p>The vicar will</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">Discuss his impressions of the congregation's history with his supervisor.Write a brief summary of the congregation's history noting his observations of trends and characteristics.Demonstrate an awareness of the congregation's history in his third sermon by referencing what he learned in his sermon preparation, an illustration, or an application.

⁵ A and B are unique to the congregation I am serving at the present time. Not all congregations are blessed with as much formal recorded history. In the absence of recorded history the lesson would have to focus more on the informal anecdotal history of the members.

Module 3: Congregational Ministry Meetings

The corporate life of the congregation is shaped and driven by the leadership's discussions and decisions. As much as preachers sometimes complain about attending meetings, they are a critical point of knowing the key influencers of the congregation. It is in the boardroom that a preacher gains a sense of the morale and the motivation of those charged with leading the organization. Listening carefully during the meetings, talking with leaders before and after the meeting, the preacher can gain valuable insight to relate God's Word to the corporate life of the congregation. In addition leaders are often affected in their leadership by what's happening in their personal and professional lives.⁶ The intuitive preacher will discover the need for God's Word in the individual lives of the leaders by considering the time he spends in meetings as part of his sermon preparation.

Table 8: Congregational Ministry Lesson Plan

1. Learning Goal	The vicar will:
	a. Explain the importance of audience analysis for preaching that connects to the real-life circumstances of his listeners.
	b. Demonstrate an intentional habit of using audience analysis as part of his regular sermon preparation regimen.
	c. Design sermons that incorporate his audience analysis learning in the application of his sermon to the real-life circumstances of his listeners.
2. Module Objectives	The vicar will
	a. State the mission and vision of the congregation.
	b. Summarize the key elements of the congregation's current plan for achieving its mission and vision.
	c. Identify the elected and appointed leaders of the congregation.
	d. Evaluate the general morale of the congregation.

⁶ This dynamic will be addressed more specifically in the final module "Specific Pastoral Interactions."

3. Learning Strategies	<p>The vicar will</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Review the congregation's plan for ministry.⁷ b. Meet with the key leaders to gain their perspective on the ministry goals of the congregation. c. Attend meetings of the ministry boards listening for sermon illustrations and applications.
4. Activities	<p>The vicar will</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Discuss his impressions of the congregation's mission, vision, and ministry plan with his supervisor. b. Write a brief summary of ministry board meetings that he attends noting any positive or negative attitudes and behaviors he observed. c. Demonstrate an awareness of the congregation's mission, vision, and ministry plan in his fourth sermon by referencing them in his sermon preparation, an illustration, or application.

Module 4: Homebound and Hospital Visitation

A powerful part of a preacher's effectiveness is established by the care he gives to people struggling with life. Old age, infirmity, disability, illness, and tragedy challenge the faith of even devout believers in Jesus. The preacher who regularly calls on the sick, the shut-in, and the hospitalized often witnesses the power of God's Word in ways that are not readily visible elsewhere. Listening attentively to the sick with Sunday's sermon text or a future sermon series floating around in his head the preacher will discover much to preach about that connects to the real-life circumstances of his listeners.

Table 9: Homebound and Hospital Visitation Lesson Plan

1. Learning Goal	<p>The vicar will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Explain the importance of audience analysis for preaching that connects to the real-life circumstances of his listeners. b. Demonstrate an intentional habit of using audience analysis as part of his regular sermon preparation regimen. c. Design sermons that incorporate his audience analysis learning in the application of his sermon to the real-life circumstances of his listeners.
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⁷ Such a plan may be in writing, but often is less formal and has to be gathered by asking leaders what the primary goals are for the year.

2. Module Objectives	<p>The vicar will</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Practice regular weekly hospital and nursing home visitation. b. Practice regular monthly homebound visitation to shut-in members. c. Relate his experiences in homebound and hospital visitation to his sermon preparation.
3. Learning Strategies	<p>The vicar will</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Keep a log of visits he makes noting basic data of the person and their situation. b. Produce a verbatim summary of the dialogue he had with a homebound member. c. Produce a verbatim summary of the dialogue he had with a hospitalized member.⁸
4. Activities	<p>The vicar will</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Discuss his verbatim summaries with his supervisor. b. Demonstrate his experience with homebound and hospital visitation in his fifth sermon by referencing the experience in his sermon preparation, an illustration, or application.

Module 5: Specific Pastoral Interaction

Many opportunities to interact with individuals, families, and groups occur in the ministry on a daily basis. The critical skill for the preacher to acquire is recognizing those opportunities as a component of his sermon preparation. Casual conversations with members and non-members alike provide insight into their daily life. Conversations with ministry board leaders before and after meetings as mentioned above are glimpses into the lives of those who listen to sermons. As a preacher becomes involved in the lives of the people in his congregation and community and they begin to trust him, the opportunity to experience the joys and sorrows of all aspects of life increases. Of course, the preacher will exercise caution in referring to readily identifiable details from his encounters from the pulpit, lest he destroy their trust in him. The goal is primarily to be

⁸ Appendix H. Sample verbatim form. A verbatim summary is a tool used in Clinical Pastoral Education to help students reflect on their visit. This module is very site specific to the congregation that I am serving. One of the major tasks of the vicars at St. Luke's Lutheran Church is visitation ministry to the hospitalized and homebound. This module could easily be rewritten to gain helpful insight into other groups such as teens, the unchurched, skeptics, etc.

aware of and let those interactions influence the reading of the Biblical text and the preparation of the sermon.

Table 10: Pastoral Interaction Lesson Plan

1. Learning Goal	<p>The vicar will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Explain the importance of audience analysis for preaching that connects to the real-life circumstances of his listeners. b. Demonstrate an intentional habit of using audience analysis as part of his regular sermon preparation regimen. c. Design sermons that incorporate his audience analysis learning in the application of his sermon to the real-life circumstances of his listeners.
2. Module Objectives	<p>The vicar will</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Identify interactions with groups and individuals as part of his sermon preparation. b. Describe specific interactions he has during the week. c. Relate his interactions to his sermon preparation.
3. Learning Strategies	<p>The vicar will</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Keep a journal of his interaction identifying individuals or groups he has spoken with and give a brief summary of things they talked about.
4. Activities	<p>The vicar will</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> c. Discuss his journal entries with his supervisor. d. Demonstrate his experience of specific pastoral interactions in his sixth sermon by referencing an experience in his sermon preparation, an illustration, or application.

These lesson plans are flexible so that the objectives, strategies and activities can be modified for different learning styles of students and adapted to the unique circumstances of other congregations. Preachers who are constantly aware of and taking note of what's going on in the lives of their listeners will be able to connect better to their real-life circumstances.

Analysis of Results

The fourth part of my project was an analysis of the evaluation results from the members who evaluated the vicar's sermons. The purpose of the evaluation was to

measure the listener's experience with the vicar prior to and during his sermons to determine how well he was connecting to their real-life circumstances. The response rate of the twenty evaluators ranged from thirteen surveys completed (sermon 3) to nineteen completed (sermon 1). This is a 65-95% response.⁹

Table 11: Date of Sermon and Percent Evaluations Completed

Date of Sermon	Evaluations Returned	Response Rate
August 21, 2016	19	95.00%
September 4, 2016	14	70.00%
September 18, 2016	13	65.00%
October 9, 2016	16	80.00%
November 13, 2016	14	70.00%
February 5, 2016	18	90.00%

The first part of the evaluation was designed to measure the level of interaction the evaluators had with the vicar prior to hearing his sermon. The evaluation revealed that those who had some interaction with the vicar ranging from a simple greeting, “Hi, how are you...” to an extended conversation lasting more than ten minutes, had a positive experience with him. None who interacted with him had a negative experience.

Table 12: Positive Interaction Prior to Sermon

	# of Respondents	# with No Interaction	# with Interaction	# with Positive Experience (5-7)	% Positive
E1 P1 Q1-4	19	7	12	12	100%
E2 P1 Q1-4	14	8	6	6	100%
E3 P1 Q1-4	13	8	5	5	100%
E4 P1 Q1-4	16	9	6	6	100%
E5 P1 Q1-4	14	5	9	9	100%
E6 P1 Q1-4	18	6	12	12	100%

⁹ Appendix J through O. Vicar sermon evaluation results.

The second part of the evaluation was designed to measure the evaluator's experience during the sermon. Specifically, I wanted to know if the evaluators felt that the vicar's sermon spoke to their real-life circumstances. The first two statements dealt with the evaluator's impression of the vicar's ability to express the meaning of the Biblical text and relate it to their real-life circumstances. The results indicated that after an initial high positive experience in the first evaluation, a decline occurred over the next three evaluations, followed by improvement in last two evaluations.

Table 13: Positive Impression of Relating Meaning of the Biblical Text

Evaluation # Part # Question #	# of Respondents	# with Negative Response (1-3)	# with Neutral Response (4)	# with Positive Response (5-7)	% Positive
E1 P2 Q1	19	2	4	13	68%
E1 P2 Q2	19	2	3	14	74%
E2 P2 Q1	14	4	2	8	57%
E2 P2 Q2	14	3	2	9	64%
E3 P2 Q1	13	3	4	6	46%
E3 P2 Q2	13	5	3	5	38%
E4 P2 Q1	16	3	4	9	56%
E4 P2 Q2	16	4	5	7	44%
E5 P1 Q1	14	1	2	11	79%
E5 P2 Q2	14	2	0	13	93%
E6 P2 Q1	18	2	2	14	78%
E6 P2 Q2	18	4	3	11	61%

The next five statements in the evaluation were designed to measure the evaluator's experience of the vicar's ability to illustrate and apply the text in a way that connected to their real-life circumstances. Specifically the statements explored the vicar's use of illustrations, including examples and self-disclosure, drawn from culture, current events, and life experiences. The results revealed that the vicar scored consistently high in his use of illustrations and applications that connected to the listeners, ranging from

70-100% positive impression (P2 Q3-6). His lowest score was in the area of self-disclosure but that improved consistently over the course of the project ranging from 26% to 62% positive impression (P2 Q7).

Table 14: Positive Impression of Illustrations and Applications

Evaluation # Part # Question #	# of Respondents	# with Negative Response (1-2)	# with Neutral Response (3)	# with Positive Response (4-5)	% Positive
E1 P2 Q3	19	1	2	16	84%
E1 P2 Q4	19	1	4	14	74%
E1 P2 Q5	19	1	5	13	68%
E1 P2 Q6	19	1	1	17	89%
E1 P2 Q7	19	7	7	5	26%
E2 P2 Q3	14	2	2	10	71%
E2 P2 Q4	14	2	2	10	71%
E2 P2 Q5	14	2	3	9	64%
E2 P2 Q6	14	2	1	11	79%
E2 P2 Q7	14	2	5	6	43%
E3 P2 Q3	13	2	3	9	69%
E3 P2 Q4	13	0	5	8	62%
E3 P2 Q5	13	1	4	8	62%
E3 P2 Q6	13	1	4	8	62%
E3 P2 Q7	13	3	2	8	62%
E4 P2 Q3	16	0	1	15	94%
E4 P2 Q4	16	0	3	13	81%
E4 P2 Q5	16	0	0	16	100%
E4 P2 Q6	16	2	3	11	69%
E4 P2 Q7	16	3	4	9	56%
E5 P1 Q3	14	0	0	14	100%
E5 P2 Q4	14	0	1	13	93%
E5 P2 Q5	14	1	3	10	71%
E5 P2 Q6	14	0	1	13	93%
E5 P2 Q7	14	1	4	9	64%
E6 P2 Q3	18	0	4	16	89%
E6 P2 Q4	18	1	2	14	78%
E6 P2 Q5	18	0	5	13	72%
E6 P2 Q6	18	1	7	10	56%
E6 P2 Q7	18	5	5	8	44%

The final four questions of the evaluation were designed to capture the evaluator's overall experience of connectedness during the vicar's sermon. In other words did the listeners walk away feeling that "the vicar 'must have been watching me' this past week because he spoke so clearly to my experience" (P2 Q8); and "at the end of the sermon I felt like the vicar was talking directly to me and my circumstances" (P2 Q11). These two questions represented the highest criteria of connectedness in the evaluation. The results from these two questions confirmed that this level of connectedness with the listeners is the most difficult to achieve. However, growth did occur. On Q8 the vicar's score went consistently up from an initial 11% positive impression in the first sermon, which was prior to receiving any instruction in audience analysis to 39% positive impression in the final sermon, with the high score of 39% in Evaluation #6. Likewise on Q11 the vicar demonstrated a steady growth from 42% positive impression in his first sermon to 56% in his final sermon.

Table 15: Overall Positive Impressions of Connectedness

	Number of respondents	Number with negative response (1- 2)	Number with neutral response (3)	Number with positive response (4- 5)	% Positive
E1 P2 Q8	19	7	10	2	11%
E1 P2 Q9	19	3	5	11	58%
E1 P2 Q10	19	0	3	16	84%
E1 P2 Q11	19	3	8	8	42%
E2 P2 Q8	14	5	4	5	36%
E2 P2 Q9	14	2	3	8	57%
E2 P2 Q10	14	2	1	12	86%
E2 P2 Q11	14	4	4	6	43%
E3 P2 Q8	13	3	6	4	31%
E3 P2 Q9	13	2	5	6	46%
E3 P2 Q10	13	0	3	10	77%
E3 P2 Q11	13	3	6	4	31%

	Number of respondents	Number with negative response (1- 2)	Number with neutral response (3)	Number with positive response (4- 5)	% Positive
E4 P2 Q8	16	5	6	5	31%
E4 P2 Q9	16	0	5	11	69%
E4 P2 Q10	16	0	4	12	75%
E4 P2 Q11	16	5	6	5	31%
E5 P1 Q8	14	3	6	5	36%
E5 P2 Q9	14	0	1	13	93%
E5 P2 Q10	14	0	0	14	100%
E5 P2 Q11	14	3	5	6	43%
E6 P2 Q8	18	6	5	7	39%
E6 P2 Q9	18	0	8	10	56%
E6 P2 Q10	18	0	1	17	94%
E6 P2 Q11	18	2	6	10	56%

Conclusion

The results of this project confirmed the thesis that intentional mentoring in the area of audience analysis would result in an increase in a vicar's ability to connect his preaching to the real-life circumstances of the listeners. I will examine these results in the next chapter and discuss other factors that contributed to the positive results. In addition I will consider the implication of this project and offer some suggestions for enhancing mentoring in the area of preaching in the vicarage program of the LC-MS seminary training.

CHAPTER FIVE

OUTCOMES

Introduction

The impetus for this thesis-project grew out of a desire to grow in my ability to preach the Word of God in order to impact the people who sit in the pews Sunday after Sunday listening to sermons. Truth be told, ten years ago we experienced a deep wound in our family that drove me to my knees and in search of answers. That was when I stumbled across the preaching of Timothy Keller of Redeemer Presbyterian Church in New York City. Over the next several years I consumed hundreds of Keller's sermon and experienced healing, renewed strength, and a conviction to preach better, to preach in a way that speaks to the reality of what people are experiencing day after day. And that was when I decided to pursue a Doctor of Ministry degree in homiletics. As I searched for programs I asked myself, "Where did Keller learn to preach like that?" The wonders of Google quickly revealed Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary. As I enrolled in the "From the Study to the Pulpit" track I was not sure exactly where it would lead. My goal was to raise the bar in my preaching.

Blessed by the first residency and confronted with the challenge of producing a final thesis-project I began to feel the burden of improving not only my preaching but perhaps the preaching of others as well. I conceived the idea of influencing new preachers through my role as a supervisor of vicars from our seminaries. The idea developed as Dr. Glenn Nielsen, the Director of Vicarage at Concordia Seminary in St. Louis, allowed me to conduct my second year project examining the homiletics instruction being given to vicars prior to my supervision. That second year project also

allowed me to assess the impact of the vicarage experience on supervisors and students through panel discussions at the annual vicarage supervisor's conference. As I approached the third residency and began reading about the role of audience analysis in preaching, the idea for this project came to full term and was born.

This thesis-project is the beginning of an ongoing pursuit of continuous improvement in my own preaching and, for the sake of the church, the development of my mentoring to transfer that passion for preaching more effectively to the vicars I supervise. The results of the project offer preliminary evidence that intentional mentoring in audience analysis helps vicars connect their preaching to the real-life circumstances of the listeners. In this section I will examine the results, analyze the implications, and note the limitations of the study.

Major Findings

The vicar to whom I administered the project demonstrated growth in his ability to connect to the listeners based on their evaluations of his sermons. The evaluations sought to measure four things: 1) the level of personal contact between the evaluators and the vicar prior to hearing him preach; 2) the vicar's ability to explain the meaning of the Biblical text; 3) the vicar's ability to prove and apply the Biblical text through illustration, examples, and self-disclosure; 4) and the listener's overall experience of connectedness in the sermon to their real-life circumstances. I will examine the results and analyze the implications of each component of the evaluation.

Personal Contact

The first part of the evaluation measured the evaluator's personal contact with the vicar prior to his sermon (P1 Q1-4).¹ The evaluators who had personal interaction with the vicar prior to listening to his sermon had a unanimously positive experience. Interestingly, however, a significant number of the evaluators reported no personal contact with the vicar prior to each of his sermon over the duration of the project (Table 12). The number of evaluators who had interaction ranged from a low of 38% prior to Evaluation 4 to a high of 67% prior in Evaluation 6. Given the fact that there are over 1000 people in worship on Sunday at St. Luke's it's not particularly surprising that an evaluator did not have personal contact with the vicar. What I found surprising was that the level of contact did not impact the positive ratings received in the other areas of the evaluation. I would have expected that the more personal contact the evaluators had with the vicar the greater the degree of connectedness to his sermon they would have experienced. While I did not track this variable specifically, my general observation is that the amount of personal contact was not a significant factor in their positive experience with his sermon (Tables 13-15). What might account for this finding?

These results led me to the following observation. The vicar's ethos played a significant role in the results of the evaluations. Ethos as I discovered in the literature review of chapter 3 consists of the audience's perception of the preacher's good sense, good character, good will, and dynamism. The Greek rhetorician Isocrates observed: "Who does not know that words carry greater conviction when spoken by men of good repute than when spoken by men who live under a cloud, and that the argument which is

¹ Appendices J through O. Vicarage sermon evaluation results.

made by a man's life has more weight than that which is furnished by words?"² Vicars in general, and this vicar in particular, possessed a strong ethos. First, the evaluators are appreciative of the commitment made by a vicar to enter the public ministry. Second the evaluators respect the academic rigor of the two years of seminary training the vicar has completed. Finally, this vicar in particular had an engaging personality and a pleasing physical appearance.

The implication of this observation is that the positive ethos of the vicar is largely granted by the listeners even when they have no personal contact with him. They want the vicars to succeed. However, a vicar who is more extroverted, with strong social skills and a pleasing appearance has an additional advantage. Of course, ethos is not everything and it can be damaged or lost. Supervisors who assess the ethos of the vicar can help him maintain and develop skills that will enhance the effectiveness of his preaching.

Explanation of Biblical Text

The first two questions in Part 2 of the evaluation measured the vicar's ability to relate the meaning of the biblical text to the listeners (P2 Q1-2).³ The evaluators experienced an initially high positive impression of the vicar's ability to relate the meaning of the text to their real-life experience, followed by a decline, and then a steady growth (Table 13). What conclusions can be drawn from these results?

My first observation is that the initially high positive impression was a result of the situation I described above, the strong positive ethos of the vicar. In the first sermon the vicar was comfortable in front of the congregation, smiled, and spoke with confidence. The congregation has been part of the vicarage program for over thirty years

² *Antidosis*, trans. George Norlin (London: William Heinemann, 1929), 2:239.

³ Appendices J through O. Vicar sermon evaluation results.

and delights in being part of the program. They want vicars to succeed. Many of the evaluators have seen a number of other vicars and this one came out strong. Once the evaluators settled into their role and realized the purpose of the project they became more discerning and realistic. Therefore, I can conclude that the growth they observed in sermons 5-6 corresponds with the instruction being given in audience analysis. Although no one can peer into the hearts and minds of the listeners, the results suggest that the vicar was beginning to explain the text in ways that connected with the listeners.

My second observation is that these results reflect the high view of Scripture in our LCMS theology and the effective teaching of exegesis and hermeneutics at Concordia Seminary. This was confirmed in the panel discussions with supervisors and students in my second year project. One supervisor said: “The seminaries are very good at teaching them exegesis. So when it comes to explanation of what text means, what’s happening there, there’s never any problem. It’s the application that they grow and mature in as they relate it to the life of the person in the pew.”

Therefore, my conclusion, based on the results of the evaluations is that vicars are well prepared at the seminary to understand the text. The tools of sound exegesis and hermeneutics are in place. Using those tools they must grow in their ability to relate the meaning of the text as they get to know the congregation. One of the students from my second year project related how his study of the text changed during the course of his vicarage, “I got a better understanding of the congregation *toward the end after being there for a year.*”⁴ The purpose of my project was to increase that understanding through intentional audience analysis. All the evaluations of the vicar’s sermons were given in the

⁴ Appendix D. Fourth year student panel discussion, Interview by author.

first six months of his training. Thus, the study suggests that knowledge of the congregation may be accelerated by the instruction given in audience analysis.

Illustrations and Examples

Questions 3-7 in Part 2 of the evaluation were designed to measure the vicar's ability to use illustrations and examples that related to the listener's real-life circumstances (P2 Q3-7).⁵ The evaluators recorded a consistently high rating of the vicar's ability to use illustrations and examples (Table 14). I will make three observations based on the results.

The first observation is that, once again, the evaluators had an initially high response to the vicar's first sermon, which was prior to any instruction in this project. The reason for this high positive response to sermon one is stated above, namely his strong ethos and the evaluator's desire to see these young preachers succeed.

The second observation is that the consistently high positive response to Questions 3-6 is due in large part to the similarity of the social and cultural background of the vicar and the congregation. Although he was considerably younger than most of the evaluators, the shared experience of being predominantly upper, middle-class suburbanites, allowed him to identify illustrations and examples that resonated with the listeners. He naturally spoke their social-cultural language. This similarity was identified in Module 1 of the project, which addressed community and cultural demographics. The vicar discovered that he "fit in" to the setting he would be serving. For the vicarage supervisor, reviewing the vicar's biographical data is the starting point for mentoring the vicar to connect with the listeners in this particular congregation. From these results I

⁵ Appendices J through O. Vicar sermon evaluation results.

conclude that the vicar with a significantly different social-cultural background will need to spend more time in the demographic analysis, have more contact time with the people he is serving, and will need more direction from the supervisor to understand and relate to the setting of the listeners.

The third observation on this part of the evaluation is the consistently lower positive response to Question 7: “The vicar showed me how the text might work in my life by showing me how it works in his life.” This result suggests that applying the text to the real-life circumstances of the listeners through self-disclosure is a more difficult skill to acquire. Several factors may account for this observation. One factor is the relatively young age of most vicars. They are typically in their mid-twenties. They typically do not have a huge reservoir of personal experience to draw on. A second factor is a tendency in our LC-MS tradition to discourage personal story telling in sermons. A third factor is the vicar’s level of spiritual maturity and sense of personal identity. A preacher who uses self-disclosure, especially as a negative example, needs to be secure in Christ to use it effectively.

During the residency in year one of “Preaching: From Study to Pulpit” a persuasive argument was made for the power of self-disclosure in connecting the text to the listeners. A quote from C.S. Lewis brought the point home, “I cannot offer you a water-tight technique for awakening the sense of sin. I can only say that, in my experience, if one begins from the sin that has been one’s own chief problem during the last week, one is very often surprised at the way this shaft goes home.”⁶ Applying this teaching to the observations from the results of Question 7 of the evaluation I conclude that supervisors need to encourage the careful use of self-disclosure in the vicar’s

⁶ C.S. Lewis, *God in the Dock*, (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1970), 96.

sermons as a means of connecting his preaching to the listeners. Based on my reading in Chapter 3 regarding effective mentoring, the personal relationship developed between the vicar and the intern is the most valuable teaching tool the supervisor has at his disposal. Since self-disclosure is highly personal, helping the vicar develop its effective use will depend on the relationship of trust that develops between them. Hence, self-disclosure may be more readily addressed in the second half of the vicarage to allow time to build that relationship.

Overall Experience of Connectedness

Questions 8-11 in Part 2 of the evaluation sought to capture the overall experience of connectedness during the vicar's sermon.⁷ Positive response to Questions 8 and 11 showed steady improvement over the course of the project (Table 15). Positive response to Questions 9 and 10, which were more general in nature, were consistently high throughout the six evaluations (Table 15). I will make one observation about Questions 9-10 and one observation about Questions 8 and 11.

The observation regarding Questions 9-10 is, once again, related to the strong ethos and social skills of the vicar who was the subject of this study. The questions were focused primarily on delivery skills, "Did the vicar seem genuinely interested in me as a person," and "Did the vicar look at the congregation and seem interested in their response to what he was saying." This vicar was very "likeable" and combined with his ability to speak without relying heavily on his manuscript or notes the evaluators felt he was aware of them and the congregation while he was preaching. The conclusion is that helping vicars evaluate and be aware of their ethos and gain freedom from their manuscript and notes will help them bring the message home to their listeners.

⁷ Appendices J through O. Vicar sermon evaluation results.

The observation on Questions 8 and 11 is that the modules I designed to teach audience analysis were effective in improving the overall experience of connectedness in the vicar's preaching. The statements, "I felt like you must have been watching me this past week," and "I felt like you were talking directly to me" are two meaningful reactions to preaching that I have received over the years. I believe they are a worthy goal for a preacher to aspire to reach. The purpose of this project was to plant the seeds of intentionality for audience analysis as the means to reach the goal of connecting to the real-life circumstances of the listeners. Therefore, based on these results, I conclude that consciously doing audience analysis as a regular part of the sermon preparation process will help the vicars I mentor connect their preaching to the listeners.

Limitations of the Study

This thesis-project attempted to study the effects of intentional instruction in audience analysis on a vicar's ability to connect his preaching to the real-life circumstances of the listeners. The struggle in this endeavor is trying to measure the subjective experience of the listeners. In the end the effectiveness of preaching rests with the Holy Spirit and there are far too many variables in the lives of listeners to accurately predict the outcome of a sermon. Three limitations to this study stand out.

The first limitation is the brief nature of the study. Six sermons delivered over a six-month period is a very small sampling. It would be interesting to continue the research over the entire year of the vicar's preaching. Even more interesting would be to track the results over several years with different vicars to observe variances from preacher to preacher. One of the most interesting things to me was the influence of this vicar's strong ethos on the positive response to his sermons. Further research could help

establish a correlation between a vicar's ethos and the enhancement of the listener's response and suggest ways to mentor vicars in the awareness and development of their ethos.

The second limitation of my study was the inability to compare the evaluation responses by age and gender demographics. Although I chose the evaluators to represent a spectrum of ages from seventeen to seventy-six with an equal representation of male and female I failed to include any responses on the evaluation to identify the age and gender of the evaluator. It would have been informative to see if the vicar was connecting more effectively with a particular age group or with one gender more than the other. It suggests another area of inquiry on how the age of the preacher influences the positive response of the listeners.

The final limitation is the realization that connectedness between the preacher and the listeners is a function of time. By that I mean that the more time a preacher spends with his listeners, the better he will get to know them, the more likely it is that he will connect his preaching to their real-life circumstances. The project cannot account for the natural connection that develops with a vicar by simply being present with the listeners for a year.

Concluding Thoughts

The results of this thesis-project and the literature review addressed the issues of enhancing the mentoring process in the supervision of vicars in preaching that connects to the real-life circumstances of the listeners. In these concluding thoughts I will reflect briefly on some observations about the vicarage program, the effects the study had on my own preaching, and the effects it had on my mentoring of vicars.

The primary observation of the vicarage program is the confirmation of my belief that the twelve-month internship program in the LC-MS Masters of Divinity program is a powerful and effective tool in the formation of preachers for our church. This resulted from my interaction with the faculty at Concordia Seminary, other vicarage supervisors, and students. While the program is effective I noted that attendance at the annual vicarage supervisor's conference is only a small representation of the supervisors. At present supervisors are only required to attend the conference in the first year they mentor a vicar, after that attendance is optional. Travel expenses and time away from the congregation can be difficult to manage for the supervisors. However, one recommendation I will make is creating a three-year cycle of mandatory attendance at the vicarage supervisor's conference. Once every three years a supervisor would be required to attend the conference to continue in the vicarage program. Attendance every year would still be optional. Because preaching is a critical component, perhaps the most critical, in the formation of future pastors I will also recommend that every year the conference have an element that addresses the preaching task.

The effects of this study on my own preaching are numerous. First, it forced a review of homiletical theory and theology that stimulated my passion for preaching that connects to the listeners. Second, the study opened my eyes to the rich nuances of preaching that are available outside the confines of my own theological tradition. Finally, the study has improved my own preaching. As I near the completion of the Doctorate of Ministry process I have received numerous unsolicited comments of the change that has been observed in my preaching. Above all the study has awakened in me a desire for

continuous improvement in my preaching, a passion I would like to share with my vicars and other vicarage supervisors.

The key word to describe the effects of the study on my mentoring of vicars in their preaching is “intentionality.” Improvement by simple repetition is undeniable. Vicars improve in their preaching by preaching. However, intentional focus during vicarage on specific skills of sermon preparation, such as audience analysis, and sermon delivery can increase the rate of improvement. Intentional focus on specific skills in sermon preparation and delivery can enhance the power of the vicarage experience in the area of preaching. Intentional focus on specific skills in sermon preparation and delivery during vicarage can impact the overall level of preaching in our church body.

Another effect of the study on my mentoring has been an increased awareness of the importance of a personal relationship with the vicars. The more time I spend with them and the interest I show in their personal lives the greater the influence my mentoring will have on their development as preachers. Once again, the word “intentional” applies. Life in a large congregation like St. Luke’s is frenetic. Spending quality time with the vicars requires a thoughtful commitment of time to their personal growth and development.

The task of preaching is an awesome responsibility entrusted by God to ordinary men and women. Learning to preach well is a lifetime learning experience. Teaching preaching to another generation of preachers is a challenging and inspiring adventure. I thank God for those engaged in the adventure at seminaries. I pray for God’s blessing on those mentoring preachers in our vicarage program. I cherish the opportunity to contribute to the cause.

APPENDIX A – TRANSCRIPT OF INTERVIEW WITH DR. DAVID SCHMITT

Me: What is your educational background? What responsibilities do you have here at the seminary in terms of teaching the preaching task?

DS: Ok. Education background: Ann Arbor grad, so a system school, double major in Biblical Languages and English Literature. My trajectory has always been dual interest in Scripture and literature, Scripture and literary arts. I came here [Concordia St. Louis] MDiv program. That was back in the 80's – '84-'88, so that's the Shmelder, Pikorney, and Muldering, and Rossow. They were all the people teaching in the preaching realm here.

After that I went to U of I and got a Masters in English Literature. So it was both a Masters in English and Master of Divinity, in English Literature.

Me: That's my University of Iowa?

DS: Oh, no, University of Illinois, Champagne-Urbana.

Did my work there in early American literature. Then I received a call to St. John the Divine in Chicago. It was a worker priest situation. I taught English at a community college as I served as pastor there.

Received a call here in '95 – July of '95 started here, so I've been teaching for 21 years. And as part of the call, it was within six years I would need to move toward a terminal degree if I wanted to – or go back to the parish. So I decided I like it and got my final degree in English Literature from Washington University studying in Restoration Literature in England in the 17th Century Literature in England.

So that's kind of the background and education.

I've been teaching preaching for all of that time. When I was brought in the way we – and it's still the way we kind of do it – was kind of a mentoring program here – so Glenn had me work with him through his class. So I saw what he did and then I was able to kind of move it forward. Your core courses, Hom1, Hom2 are pretty much standard. We try to keep them similar and then the 4th year are the electives where you develop what you want to develop. So I became very interested in sermon structures and kind of the stuff I developed in the 4th year work. Then as time went on most of the Hom2 teachers kind of disappeared. So I became the primary Hom2 guy – 2nd year homiletics – and then I do teach Hom1 and I put together a manual now, we have other guys like Todd Jones and Ben Haupt, both taught Hom1 and I've kind of mentored them in teaching Hom1.

Me: We're going to start up at the high elevation and then zero down in to the individual student. The first question I have is: what's the understanding or definition of the purpose of preaching as it's understood here at Concordia? What definition of preaching do we work with?

DS: The definition of preaching that is supposed to be standard in all of the Hom1 courses is that preaching is: the authoritative public proclamation of the faith based on a text of Scripture, centered in the death and resurrection of Christ for the forgiveness of sins, for the benefit of the hearers in faith and life.

That definition is intentionally integrated into the work that the students do.

Me: Thinking about that definition on the range that is out there in the church at large in terms of definition, philosophy or approach to preaching where do you put us and that definition on that spectrum? And if you have sort of on the one end what I'm getting at maybe at Gordon-Conwell approach to Scripture – a herald type understanding of the Scripture (DS: Oh, really!) being expanded and challenged and growing out from that and all the way out to that what I've discovered to be the neo-orthodox approach where the word sort of becomes the word as it's delivered to the hearer and they interact with it, then it becomes God's word as that occurs. Where are we on that spectrum?

DS: On the one end of the spectrum, you're working with it sounded like Barth and Long's definition of herald and if you work with Long's four qualities – the herald, the pastor, the artist, and the witness – we would be the witness model. So it's more than simply taking this word and delivering it to the people. There's a faithful interaction with the word that happens on the part of the proclaimer so that it is actually a witness bearing that happens in the sermon. And for us as Lutherans it's a witness bearing of Christ, so the centrality of the Law/Gospel proclamation would really set us apart from kind of a herald model, or even just a plain, expository model. We would believe that if you're actually going to preach the text, you will preach Christ. We have a Christocentric hermeneutic, so the Christocentricity is going to set us apart from that end of the spectrum.

When you get to the other end – the dialogical preaching – I think the – it kind of depends – if you read Caemmerer – very interestingly, Caemmerer situates the office of preaching within that conversation. He anchors it there. He works with the term – homilegeo – conversation, and he argues that the conversation of the faithful is what the pastor captures and puts forth when he preaches. So it's a – kind of the way Ft. Wayne understands preaching, not how traditional Lutherans understand preaching, what Caemmerer says, but I don't think most people know it.

So there is some affinity to the notion that God's word is active, that there is a balance between the office of the preacher and the priesthood of all believers, the mutual consolation of the saints. For us, however, the authoritative public proclamation of the faith, that's going to be anchor in the call of the Spirit through the church, Article XIV, that's going to be what's going to set us apart from the more dialogical. So the “based in Scripture” portion of it, AC V, and the call of the preacher by the Spirit through the congregation, both of those things are going to temper a radical dialogical approach.

Me: The next level in is looking at the curriculum for forming students to be preachers here. So briefly describe the core classes that the seminary uses to prepare preachers. What's the scope and sequence of Hom1 and Hom2?

DS: Hom1 is your very basic course. It teaches you a method of sermon preparation. Not THE method, but A method to get you started. The text you're going to preach on are going to be Epistle texts or narrative texts from the Gospels that do not include, miracles or parables. So you try to choose texts that are easier hermeneutically. And you'll preach three sermons – you'll write two sermons and preach one sermon or you'll write three sermons and preach one. It depends on who's teaching it. The preaching will be done in class so there is a delivery component to the course. Normally you have them do a small devotion in front of the class and then do delivery exercises with one another in a small group, preach their sermon to one another in a small group and then preach it to the whole class at the end.

So you're working on all aspects of the very basics of the general Sunday morning sermon. We teach three different forms in that course. You teach a text/application form, you teach a Law/Gospel sermon form, could be Lowry Loop, it could be four pages of the sermon by Wilson, and then you teach an expository form that follows either a verse by verse, or a thematic flow of the text. And that's Hom1.

Me: How does the expository differ from text/application?

DS: Text/application would be the opening of the sermon would all be an unpacking of the text and then you would move to applying it to your hearers. The expository form would follow a reading of some verses of the text and then applying it, more verses, more application, more verses, application. Or you would have an overarching theme that is unfolded – sometimes you're not going to follow the flow of the text – you're going to follow the flow of the teaching.

Me: The order of the thoughts...

DS: Right. Reu made the distinction in his homiletics between analytic and synthetic. And it's basically that thing. Analytic goes verse by verse. Synthetic reads all the verses, then comes up with the teaching and then uses portions of the text to support parts of the teaching as you go through.

Me: But it may or may not be in the order they actually appear in the text.

DS: Right.

Me: And then Hom2?

DS: In Hom2 we complicate things. We complicate the delivery by having the students now preach in a congregation and get feedback on their preaching, watch the video themselves, evaluate their sermon and then submit it to the instructor who goes over it

with them and then comes up with a plan for how to grow in whatever deliver issue they have. So it's not done in the class, it's done in the congregation. You're having multiple voices and you're also evaluating the student's ability to self-evaluate.

In terms of text we complicate it because we begin to introduce Old Testament texts, miracle texts, and parable texts.

And in terms of occasion we complicate it because we move beyond the Sunday morning sermon to occasional sermons: wedding, funerals, and then children's messages are thrown in there.

Me: In your class, you have some Hom1, and Hom2 and you oversee all of that. What are the steps that you teach the students to prepare a sermon? What's the methodology that you teach them to follow?

DS: We have an eight-step methodology, which basically, the first issue, is to get the second text on paper – the second text – we talk about everything that's in their life that causes them to read into Scripture things that may or may not be there. So the first thing you do is read the text in the translation that it will be used on Sunday morning and you just write out whatever's on your heart and mind, you just get it out there on paper. So that now it can be critically evaluated and it doesn't control you, but it's there, it's a conversation partner.

Second step then moves into the textual exposition and it has two components. The translation of the text, study of the text, what you're looking for is three things – what is the content of the text, what is the function of the text, and what is the form of the text. You're going to look at literary form, content, and pragmatics.

Then you look at the context of the text. We recognize that the pericopal system rips little pieces of Scripture out, so you have read around it to get the context. So that's the next two steps.

The fourth step begins to meditate theologically on the text and think about what are the teachings of the faith that are present in the text, how has this text been used by the church to confess the faith over time.

Then you move to the evangelical proclamation step, the Christocentricity and you ask how does this text bring you to Christ?

Then you move to your hearers and you ask questions about how this text is interacting with their lives.

And then you form what we call your Focus and you Function statements for the sermon.

Me: Those are out of Long, then, Focus and Function.

DS: Focus and Function are out of Long. We have different – you know Glenn uses Caemmerer – so the language for Glenn is Goal, Malady, Means. If you use Caemmerer fully it's central thought – which is Long's Focus; Goal – which is Long's function; Malady-Means which is Lutheran Christocentricity. Then for us – I use Long – so that's how we get those things.

But basically what it is – they have a sermon preparation sheet that they fill out. So these are really the five parts that they will do through that process: They will write an exegetical statement, where they summarize the Form, Function, and Content of the text; they will write a focus statement, which is a clear teaching of the faith that they are going to preach; they will have a function statement which describes sanctification, what the Spirit will do in the lives of the hearers through that word proclaimed; they have malady and means as the Law/Gospel.

With those five things they have our definition of preaching. Our definition of preaching is: authoritative public proclamation of the FAITH – that's your focus statement; based on a text of Scripture – that's your exegetical statement; centered in the death and resurrection of Christ for the forgiveness of sins – that's your malady and means; for the benefit of the hearers for faith and life – that's your function.

So their sermon prep sheet puts into a very practical, pragmatic form the theoretical and theological definition of preaching that they learn.

Me: Can you share that with me? Send me a copy.

DS: Sure.

Me: What would you say are the top three goals or objectives for your students – coming out of Hom2, let's say, before they go on vicarage? If you have three things you really want them to be able to do before they head out to that 12-months of internship, what would you put as your top three?

DS: I'd say that the top three would be that they preach Christ; that they are able to be faithful to the Scripture; and that they are able to be faithful to the people that God is entrusting to their care.

Me: Help me understand the relationship between their hermeneutics course work here and their homiletic course work. Do those two things actually cross over in your experience?

DS: Depends on who's teaching the hermeneutics, right? When Lessing taught hermeneutics, or when Saleska, when Kloha teaches hermeneutics they intersect very, very well. When other people teach hermeneutics is not as good of an intersection. Usually the thing that they struggle with the most is in hermeneutics they tend to get the idea that they need to preach the text, or be faithful to the text, rather than be faithful to the task of preaching. That would be how I differentiate it.

Because the text – Jeff Gibbs has this thing he calls the hermeneutical harness where he pulls their head down in the text and they can't look up. And so you get a lot of students who are prone to produce a Bible study – and they're not really – I just had this in Hom2 – a guy who came up to me – and you know – he had absolutely no – horrible application in his sermon. We have this congregational profile that's been written, that has narratives of people in the church, and all that stuff and he didn't mention any of it. And I asked, what's going on? And he said, well, I'm not being faithful to the text, to talk about that kind of stuff because that's not in the text. And I'm like, you know, you're called to be faithful to the task of preaching, and the task of preaching is "based on a text" – it's a little bit more than just doing the text again.

So that's where we struggle with hermeneutics.

Me: With this experience with Gordon-Conwell – I think, is it John Stott's model that has ...

DS: between two worlds...

Me: right, the bridge between two worlds. So you're going from the world of the text, which is kind of the hermeneutical component, and then you've got to bring it over into the world of the hearer. It seems to be really useful as a way of thinking about it. But I see vicars struggling with that, where they're either much over here in the world of the listener or they're much over here...

DS: and they can't do both. And that's what they really struggle with. And I think part of it is that all of us have our own enemies that we're fighting and so a lot of the exegetes are fighting the pastors who are preaching something that has nothing to do with the text. And so, they're really, really, pushing the text. And on the other hand, my enemies are the guys that just kind of inform us about the Jebusites but have nothing to do with our lives today.

So I think that that's the area where it's conflicted. Now that's going to be resolved in the new curriculum. But presently that is a situation where it's hard for the students. So the students tend to gravitate toward what comes most naturally to them.

Me: Might be an area to focus on a little bit on this project that I'm working on – is how to get them to see that. It seems to fit so well. So many of our theological constructions of paradox where you have to keep – and I think I heard it the first time probably from Dr. Voelz in Ft. Wayne – the picture of the spring that's compressed from both ends you have to keep the pressure on – this is the law/gospel thing as well, because if you turn loose with either hand you lose the energy that's stored up in the paradox. So, I think that's true of this world of the text – world of the listener component as well. Trying to get that picture to them.

So this is a bunny trail for me, but I want ask it. Are students encouraged – maybe not in Hom1, maybe in Hom2 – to study or listen to the preaching of any outside the Lutheran tradition?

DS: Both in Hom1 and in Hom2 I'll use videos and I'll have them read sermons from pastors outside the tradition. So for the thematic-expository style they listen to a sermon series on the Prodigal Son by Keller. In Hom2 – this is being taped... - but I'll use sermons from women in the courses. I've had students complain to me why are the women's sermons so good! (Laughter)

Me: Maybe to challenge you to think a little bit?

DS: Yes, because they wish I would use these horrible sermons – but they are very much exposed to other sermon styles from other traditions.

Me: Now, coming down to more the to individual student level. As you look at students, what priority do you see them attaching to the preaching task in their overall training for the pastoral ministry?

DS: I rarely have a student who doesn't see it as extremely important. They tend to see it extremely important. I think many of them unfortunately have such a high view of it and such a low view of their own skill sets that they become frightened and that fear can manifest itself in the use of preaching resources and other people's sermons just because they're so afraid of their own voice. Or just getting frozen in the process itself and it just takes them forever to write a sermon to the point where it's not going to be manageable when they get into the real ministry. So I think they have a very high view of preaching, which is great. The lack of self-confidence and the working of the Spirit in themselves poses problems for them. So it's not – for me – I don't think I need to address elevating their understanding of preaching but what I need to address is how to help you trust in the working of the Spirit through the Word to form you into a proclaimer?

I don't think – I've never had a student who's come that didn't see the preaching task as maybe the primary task or if not way up there – I suppose there's a few guys who think they're going to be chaplains or niche ministry where preaching isn't their primary aspect. But it seems to be pretty high on their list.

Me: Have you noticed any increase or decrease in the interest in preaching task over your years as a professor? Is it changing?

DS: It's becoming more dichotomized in terms of missional and liturgical, I guess one could say. So that the church planting, missional, 30 minute sermon, dialogical – all of those – kind of – I say experimental forms because they're experimental for the Lutheran church – for us – I have guys who are very interested in that. And at the same time I have guys who are very interested in a – high liturgical – not high – but a liturgical service where you have a 10-12 minute sermon based on a lectionary reading. So they seem to be more attuned to how they want to preach – (me: one or the other) – right, and it tends to fall in those areas, which promotes good class discussion.

Me: And getting them to maybe see each other's perspective is a challenge. How well do you think students actually grasp the homiletical theory that's being taught in your classes?

DS: That's hard, hard to measure. In order to pass the course they need to be able to complete the sermon prep sheet and the sermon prep sheet is very closely attached to the definition of preaching which is based on our theology of preaching so I'd say that at the very basic level they get the general idea, but as you know, preaching is an art and there's a lot of other theories that swirl around as you discuss sermons and as you work with sermons and I would say at that level there probably just glimpsing these things and recognizing that there's further reading they could do. But for the standard sermon I think they're equipped.

Me: What's some key indicators of a student's interest or ability to pursue excellence in their preaching? When you look at a student are there any key indicators that cause you to identify them as one who really is going to go after this thing and continue to improve and pursue excellence?

DS: Humility. Most guys whose preaching is personal – and that's what we want it to be – some guys become very defensive about their preaching because you critique it – as personal attack. And so humility is amazing. When you find a student who's humble and open to learning in that sense – they don't need to defend what they've done. They can talk about why they did what they did but they're like, wow, I didn't even think about it that way. I could see how this could happen. That's usually a good indicator and then a self-motivated learner. The guys that are – they have a certain interest that drives them to see – my belief is that preaching is always interdisciplinary, that's there always something else that's being joined to it. So you've got a guy whose a musician and loves music and so he's really interested in exploring how music theory of motifs and themes might be helpful for the performance of a sermon. Now that type of a thing – that self-motivated learning and humility – those things will be a good sign that a person will pursue excellence.

Me: Again, very fascinating sort of those pressures from both sides because there's that humility that's born out of a genuineness of understanding who they are in Christ, that their value and character and worth and dignity as a human being is rooted in something Christ did for them combined with a boldness (DS: that recognizes they've been gifted). Right. (DS: As Christ has apportioned it). That wants to learn – is a rare combination. I think you see humility and boldness often born out of insecurity which is what you were talking about before. They have such self-doubt that they have a false humility or a false vibrato.

DS: I think the third quality that would factor in there would be a – for true excellence in preaching – would be a love of Christ for the people. They may love the text but when they get out there if they really love people they'll recognize that this isn't touching them. And then they'll want to change. Those would be the things.

Me: Look at the people and (DS: Right, at their faces) ...

Kind of the wrap up here is looking at the vicarage experience itself, I guess I was somewhat proud and surprised to know that we're fairly unique at having this 12-month internship, that most Masters of Divinity programs are three years and out – maybe on a probationary status. We have Reformed Theological Seminary right around the corner in Oviedo where I'm at and the MDiv is a three year program. My son is actually currently enrolled at Duke Divinity School in a Masters of Divinity program and it's three years and out. So thinking about our vicarage program how much change do you actually see in student's preaching ability post-vicarage?

DS: It's amazing. It is amazing! I would gladly teach a fourth year class instead of a first or second year class because the act of preaching in context changes the questions they ask, changes the ways in which they value certain activities of learning. It's just amazing. So that the practice of doing it really changes them.

Me: Here's the last question. If you were given the opportunity to work one on one with a student for twelve months where would you start and what steps would you take to help them grown in their preaching ability?

DS: Well, the first thing I would do is I would have the student do a spiritual autobiography of what preaching has been for them in their life. So, because most students don't have their preaching voice and so they're either reacting against preaching they've heard they don't like or they're reacting toward preaching they heard that they like and they're trying to become that preacher. So I would want to know what they are bringing to the table not in terms of their knowledge but in terms of their real life experience. What experiences have you had? What preachers have you liked? What do you never want to do when you preach? What do you always want to do when you preach? Just to get a sense of who they are.

Second thing I would do, is I would have them do, I would take them through some type of activity that would help them learn how to exegete a congregation. It might be talking with members about what are the stories of this place. It might be analyzing the rituals and the space. But it would be trying early on help them develop a good sense of who these people are because those are who they're going to be preaching to. And I would want it to be a model they could then implement later when they are on their own.

So you've got their personal spiritual autobiography, the exegesis of the congregation. And I would want them to have in place a group of congregational members and it would probably change as we went through, either by gender, age, something like that. But a group of congregational members who would be their feedback loop so that after they preach these people would interact with them and they would interact with people so that they would be able to get some raw, real comments about their preaching.

And then there would be the task of working with the student and helping them, after a few sermons, helping them learn a way of continually growing through preaching. And that is, how do we identify and address our preaching, how do we identify weakness, how do we find ways of working on that intentionally as we go through. And that would more depend on what I see and what I'm trying to help them see. So, we have video tapes, we watch a sermon they do, there's preparatory work, what's your prep process, how's that going?

So it's more a matter of – it's not a matter so much of having certain things that they have to do as it's a matter of helping them get into the practice of saying I'm constantly sharpening the sword. I'm constantly working on certain skills. And any deficiency I have I can plan to address it.

Me:

I appreciate your time. Are there any questions that you expected me to ask that I didn't? That I forgot?

DS: No. You had very good questions.

APPENDIX B – TRANSCRIPT OF INTERVIEW WITH DR. GLENN NIELSEN

Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, MO. September 15, 2015.

Me: So it's running and we're going to spend a little time together talking about homiletics and your perspective on it. So for the record if you would give your name and education, background, what parish experience you've had and then you're teaching experience.

GN: Graduated from here in 1981 and then I did an STM in systematic theology. I received that in 1987 at which point I then went to Northwestern University and received both an MA and a PhD in Communication Studies from Northwestern. Most people would know that as rhetoric, but they don't go by rhetoric, they go by communication studies because it's a broader program up there that includes organizational, small group, mass media, but I focused just in the speech communication or rhetorical side.

Before I went to Northwestern I spent five years in the parish at Immanuel, St. Charles, MO. Large congregation, part of a three pastor team. I was the third pastor and I served that for five years.

And then in 1990 in the midst of my PhD program I was called back here and I started January 2 as the Director of Vicarage and I've been doing that ever since. It's now vicarage and deaconess internships, but it also then includes oversight of all the other programs. I teach classes now – I've taught a variety of classes over the 25 years – but the last few years have focused on Homiletics 1, the introductory course. I enjoy teaching that, not everybody does because it's a lot of work and working with introductory students. I enjoy teaching that. I find the students very engaged and wanting to learn because this is such an important thing, so I already have their attention.

I teach the 4th year course on creative homiletics which is an interest that I have. And then I teach DMin courses on Law/Gospel in preaching and recent trends in homiletics, looking at the major figures since the 1970's. And then in the PhD program I teach a course on communication and culture. So those are the courses I teach now.

Me: I'm going to start at the high elevation and then come down. So the next set of question is really focused on looking at the big picture of philosophy and approach to homiletics. If you could give me your perspective of the definition and the purpose of preaching within our Lutheran context, how do we view preaching?

GN: The common definition that we use here at Concordia Seminary, and I'm very comfortable with it, is that: it is authoritative public discourse, it's based on a text of Scripture; it's centered in the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ for the benefit of the hearers faith and life. So it breaks down fairly simply. It's authoritative – it comes out of the authority of the pastoral office. Public – meaning, not in front of people as much as on behalf of people – like a public servant. And discourse – it means it's communication, particularly oral discourse.

So authoritative public discourse located in the pastoral office, speaking on behalf of the people and involving communication skills. Based on a text of Scripture – so we are working with God’s Word. That’s the normative function of the Word. Centered in the death and resurrection, now that phrase was developed here in probably the 1980’s, 90’s. Bill Schmelder was probably the one who was very influential in that. It got reduced to that death and resurrection. I’d like to see it expanded a bit more to the fullness of promise, incarnation, birth, ministry, miracles, the whole ... his ascension, his cession, his return ... all of that is gospel. So we center in the death and resurrection, and there’s some accuracy to that because sooner or later the sermon is going to come back to one of those or both of those key events.

And then finally it’s for the benefit of the people, for their faith and the life that flows out of that faith. So that’s the definition we work with. And the purpose, I still have as the purpose of all my sermons, if you want to capture my preaching ministry, is that I want to send the people home strengthened and encouraged by the gospel. I want people to leave strengthened and encouraged by the gospel. That’s my over arching goal. Now each individual sermon has specific goals, but that’s my overarching goal for the preaching ministry.

Me: You mentioned teaching current trends in homiletics and the DMin level so I’m trying to get my head around the spectrum of homiletics in the church at large. How do you understand that range of philosophy or approach to the preaching task in the larger church? I’m thinking that on one end there’s almost a fundamentalist, historical-grammatical, almost reciting what the text says all the way maybe to the other end of a neo-orthodoxy where the Word becomes the Word as it’s being preached. Can you talk to me about that a little bit?

GN: I’ll do it first on the ... in that class the spectrum that we use comes more from like Cosgrove or the female homiletician, she worked underneath – Fred Craddock – and died of cancer a few years back. I can’t remember her name off the top of my head, but it ranges from the very traditional which was sort of declarative, I’m the herald, people are receiving this word. It had almost more of a didactic feel to it. Comes more out of a modern era. And then you moved along and there the more of a kerygmatic, it was called, in which it becomes an event. And so we as Lutherans are much more comfortable with that because it wasn’t the more reformed educational focus but it was a means of grace proclamation focus of the keryma. And then you sort of moved into the more New Homiletics style in which there was more participation by the hearers. It became more narrative. They filled in more of the preaching moment. And so you get the people like Craddock and Lowery and even in a sense you get Thomas Long in there. And then you go almost to the extreme with preaching as roundtable, preaching as discussion, preaching as conversation.

And as I look at my own preaching, I was trained far more in the traditional as the herald and kerygmatic, proclamation of it. As time has gone on I’ve become very enamored in incorporating a great deal of the New Homiletic that’s gone in there. But the field of

homiletics itself has moved, I would say, not to the roundtable or conversational but to what I would call relational, in which the pastor is in relationship with the people, so that you're not using the pulpit, you might be getting feedback from them. It's more of an interactive type style but it doesn't go as far as – they form the sermon in conversation with you. I see myself as having moved in between those second and third roles.

Me: Coming from high elevation and zooming down a little bit I want to talk next about the curriculum here for forming students to prepare them as preachers. I have the syllabus so I don't need a detailed explanation, but your perspective on the scope and sequence, the core classes, what opportunities – and we heard some of this in our conference – students have to preach in class and outside of class before they go on vicarage?

GN: When a student takes Hom1 depends on how many languages they had under their belt before they arrive at the seminary. So in the sequence they have to have exegetical courses, particularly the hermeneutics course before they can take Homiletics 1. If they come in with both languages they can have the hermeneutics course fall or winter of their first year and they are taking homiletics in the spring of their first year. If they are missing one of the languages they take that in the fall quarter so hermeneutics is pushed back a quarter and homiletics comes in the summer, we call that Track 2. And then Track 3 are those who didn't have either language so they are taking it in the fall quarter of their 2nd year.

That makes a difference in when they are taking it, how much experience they've got under their belt and who's tracking along with them. Even before we get to the sequence we've got them tracked in groups. And typically those who come in with both languages have come from one of the Concordias, they've already had some prep for it. There's a little bit more foundational material there. They typically have a head start. You get to the second and third tracks you don't have quite the same foundation that you're working with.

The sequence in Hom1 is very typical. You open one of these homiletical textbooks that I've got on my shelf, *Biblical Preaching*, or Thomas Long and most of them are going to deal with the same thing. How are you going to work with a text? And then for us as Lutherans our next step is Goal, Malady, Means here at the seminary, Law/Gospel, or we will talk about it terms of Focus and Function from Thomas Long's book.

Dave Schmitt really works with Focus and Functions. Our new curriculum is probably going to work with that language. I still somewhat enjoy the Goal, Malady, Means. You've got Function as your Goal statement, and Focus as your theme statement, and then inside there you've got your Law/Gospel dynamic.

We do that and then it moves on to how do you structure a sermon, how do you write for oral proclamation. You do that three times in the course. And then you do individual topics, illustrations and stories, how to be visual, how to understand the people theologically as saint/sinner, how to preach to a congregation, how do you understand

them in terms of their creation as to who they are in listening beings as part of this culture that we live in. And I do a few things as well, a little smattering about the use of technology. Then of course there's delivery. And we have them deliver a sermon. The only sermon they deliver in class is in that Hom1.

Hom2, I haven't taught, I just know the topics: Old Testament, Miracle, Parable, Wedding, Funeral and Children's Sermon. So you divide the class up and you say these are the unique things about preaching an Old Testament text and I suppose they have to write a sermon for each one of those. But I don't teach that course. You need to ask the other people more about that.

They go out on vicarage and I would say the average preaching for most of the students is 25 times. They get 25 sermons in there. Once you start adding – the first few months it might be only once a month – but then you get November and you get one at Thanksgiving and at Christmas you get a couple Advent ones, and a Sunday one, and then Lent comes through and maybe they get the whole Lenten series. So they get all of those and then the pastor goes on vacation in the summer and they get three in a row. It's about 25. Some will do every other week. Others it's more every third week.

And the mentoring of that varies from supervisor to supervisor and finally then in their 4th year they get one more course, an elective, a two-credit course, so it's not even as extensive. I teach Creative Homiletics. I used to preach Problems in Preaching – that's a real happy title. But there's Law/Gospel, is another one. Preaching in the Post Modern Era, Sermon Structures, individual topics.

The students would like to have more say as to which one they would take. But because we only have enough sections for the number of students who need to take them, so we're back to that Track type system, they come back from vicarage, you're going to take it in this quarter and you have these two classes to choose from. You're going to take it in this one or you going to take it in this one. There's no flexibility. You've got to take it in this quarter because that's how we've plotted it out. So they might have a choice between one or two. Some would like to take three courses. It's just not built into the curriculum for them.

Me: When you do that Hom1 class do you give them a set of steps to follow to prepare their first sermon? And what are those steps?

GN: Yes. First of all the textual analysis is in a very clear document form.

These are the steps that we use for the textual study. So here's the approach: liturgical setting, exegetical analysis includes the original language, contextual material, parallel passages, focused study on some word or concept, commentary study, and then the theological study from the Confessions. So that's the way to get through the text study.

Goal, Malady, Means is next and it's just a pretty standard form. And then they do a structure and then they do a manuscript. So it's step by step by step.

Me: So they actually identify a structure that they are following?

GN: I give them three structures in Hom1, to start with. And they are fairly broad based. The first one is the old deductive style, which I will commonly call the outline, Roman numerals I, II ... fairly deductive, what are the points for ... but I alter it a little by saying I'm less interested in how you prove something and I'm much more interested in how you show something. So if you've got this statement of "angel's praise" I'm more interested in – not that you prove to me that they're praising but show me ways that they do. That's where it brings in much more of the stories and illustrations.

The second one is from the New Homiletic, much more of a narrative type style. We teach, I teach everybody in my classes the Lowry Loop. And then I make – Eugene Lowry if he was sitting there, he'd be very upset at me – because then I show all sorts of variations on it. Some with just a little bit of the downward loop for the Law and Opps, and the Ugh and whole bunch for the Aha, after the Whee and the Yes and that's a lot longer, which is just the opposite of what Lowry would want to do. So it's that narrative plotted structure.

So one is more spatial, the other is more time based. And then the third one is not quite Haddon Robinson's expository preaching. I call it a textual structure in which they break the text, not verse by verse, but unit by unit by unit. So there's three or four units and then they preach the flow of the text. Some of that turns out to be narrative because they do it with a parable, or some event in the Gospels. But sometimes it works – it's pretty fascinating to see what happens then with like a Pauline Epistle when they work with that. So, those are the three structures I teach. And typically what happens because they are so familiar with it is the Lowry Loop is our Law/Gospel narrativized, that first Law, then Gospel – narrativized. They've heard that through their lives. They can identify that – it feels natural to them. And then because it's got these five things, Oops, Ugh, Aha, Whee and Yeah – they feel "I can plug into that – oh, oh, OK" – and it's easy for them to use. I probably get two out of the three sermons from most students will use that and then I'll say, OK, now do something else. And they'll fumble a little bit more. Dave Schmitt has greater variety that he begins to use within his Hom2 classes.

Me: I know that hermeneutics is taught in an exegetical department separately and then they come to you in Hom1. How do you see – do they make that connection between using their hermeneutics in what they've learned now in starting to write their sermon, are they making that connection?

GN: Well I hope so. I don't know what's taught in Hermeneutics. I've never sat in the class. I've never looked at a syllabus. Probably my lacunae, my fault, I've never taken time to do so, but what I've done is I teach a pretty standard way of looking at a text and most of the steps are fairly – I do some things that others don't do – emphasize more – and some do things that I don't do. For me when it comes to the original language, I simply tell them that they get no extra points for sight-reading in the parish. What you want to do is you want to make use of all the resources you can, linguistic keys, commentary notes, anybody that can give you insight into the text. You're never going to

be any of the exegetical pros here, maybe one or two of you might end up that way, but for most of us in the parish we simply don't have the time to do that kind of in-depth linguistic study. So we just find somebody that we trust and they'll tell us why this verb form is used here, what the idiom is. And that way you at least keep use of the original language because if you rely on just trying to do it as an exegetical paper you'll give up.

Me: Do you find them, then, doing pretty well at discovering the meaning in the text to build their sermon off of, where they've actually worked it enough to say, this is what this text is trying to say?

GN: I ask them to do a couple things. First of all, one of the things I ask them to do is to restate the content of the text using much of the vocabulary of the text and the thought sequences but in a short paragraph form. So they have to paraphrase the heart of that and process right through it. And sometimes I'll get somebody who just is all over the place. And I'll call them back and say I want you to restate this in words from the text in a very coherent and clear way that still summarizes the thought progression of the text. So they need to do that. Then they do all this work and when they finally get down to it they're going to have to produce a goal statement, there going to have to produce what kind of law is coming out of this, what kind of gospel, what direction it's going to be and I'm looking for every step to breath that textual study. And if they start to get something wrong I can redirect them.

I had one text – this summer – can't remember it – and I had 12 students and 7 of them made a leap and said “now, Jesus is the greatest example.” I went back to the text and I said, ok, where do you get Jesus as the example here? Well, I guess we don't. Because what your doing here is taking Jesus as Savior from this passage and you're turning him into the example which is Law, because now we have to do what he did! Oh.

So, I mean, they're early learners on a bicycle. I remember the first few times I rode my bicycle I was on a farm up in Wisconsin. I got too confident, oops, brakes, brakes, brakes, oh, smashed right into the chicken coup. Ah, everybody's laughing at me, but there are students that are very gifted and there are other students that it's uncertain as to whether they're going to be able to get it even if they do the hermeneutical work.

I was called to come and listen to a vicar one time. The pastor was out of town and he said, could you just be here and consecrate the elements but listen to the teacher preach and teach because I've got some real concerns. And this was in June – 10 months into the vicarage. And I said sure, I'll be on my way up to take my daughter back to Chicago. So we stopped and the sermon was about these momentary troubles in that Romans or Corinthians passage – but these momentary troubles are nothing compared to the eternal glory that we're going to see. And he took on that word temporary and these are all our temporary idols. I mean idols? There's no idols there. It's talking about people going through tough times and they're temporary compared to the eternal glory. And he's talking about this idol and this idol, they're all temporary, they don't compare to the eternal. I'm thinking did you even read this? And so we had a little conversation

afterwards but when you're on vicarage you should be able to at least figure it out! But not everyone does.

Me: Practicing. And then trying to figure out how their mind is actually working to process it. I think I had mentioned to you this little book that Randall Pelton had produced called *Preaching with Accuracy: How to Find the Christ-centered Big Idea*. And he was our teacher for one week of the first residency and that has really proved to be a helpful thing for me to go back to and follow a pattern of how does narrative work, how do proverbs work, how do parables work, how does didactic literature work and then being able to locate, where is the idea that the author was trying to convey so that I'm zeroing in on – again from Robinson's Big Idea. When Pelton was saying to us, we're in doctoral work and Haddon Robinson is up in front and there are all these graduate level people and he would say, What's the Big Idea? And nobody could get what he was thinking the Big Idea was which pushed Pelton back into how do you actually discover what the text was trying to say so that you can then try to build off of that.

GN: And allow for the text to have multiple voices that at different times and different contexts that Big Idea may come out in a different way or

Me: actually meaning something different than the original author intended?

GN: At that point when you read the Gospel of John and you ask was John referring to this or to that? And the answer typically is yes. So one time I'm coming through and I'm saying, oh well..., and the next time I'm coming through it's this way. It's a different approach. I'm not as concerned about the text's big idea as I want to see how can this text function in a hearers life and there can be a variety of functions out of the text. I want to be careful in saying I have to come up with this big idea, and there's only going to be one for this text and that's what I have to preach on every time I come to this text. I much more concerned – that's why I said I moved from a more reformed, traditional to the kerygmatic and New Homiletic because that allows for the text to an active word.

I just wrote a little article for the seminary magazine on living and active preaching. I used the contrast "says" "informs" and "content" on one side and on the other side I had "does" "performs" and "intent." And so what happens with the big idea is you get the content, what it says, and informs – the big idea almost pushes you into that area. And I wanted to work more with a Goal that pushes me into what the text does, what the text's performative role is, what the text is intending to do. So I've not been a huge user of Robinson's big idea.

Me: It's been kind of fascinating to me. We read Robinson at Ft. Wayne when I was there under Aho. And then coming back coming at it again from this DMin perspective and I think, they credit John Stott with the bridge building model where you have to go from the world of the text into the world of your audience and build a bridge between those two and that's kind of what I hear you saying with the Big Idea, is that if that's all you do you're going to wind up out here on this end the

traditional, declarative, herald type of preaching vs. – and that’s not what I’m hearing in the exchange – it’s very much focused on the intent of what’s the text trying to do, starting with why did it get written down in the first place and then how does that translate into our modern day. So it’s going to be very interesting as I continue to – and it’s true that we tend to probably narrow and pigeon hole approaches that people have. So for example I hear somebody say “expository preaching” and by that they mean something very small and very narrow that is not what I am hearing at Gordon-Conwell - what people understand expository preaching to be. So trying to be little bit more thoughtful, gracious in the way that I hear those things.

Let me – because you know this is one of my pet peeves – swerve off here. But are students encouraged to study or listen or to read the preaching of others outside the Lutheran tradition?

GN: No, I don’t do much of it in Hom1. I’m just trying to get them to write a sermon. I use my sermons as examples. Some people are less enthused about that. They say you should probably take the best example from the preaching world. But in Hom1 I’m preaching what I know and what I do and I let them see it and they can critique. I don’t have to worry about what the other preacher might have wanted to do. I can say why I was doing this, why I might have short-circuited something, or didn’t something well. I’ll show them Thomas Long preaching. I’ll show them William Willomen preaching. I’ll let them hear Fred Craddock preaching in terms of how delivery style can be different.

But in Hom1 it is just – we are going to turn out these three sermons. And I don’t have them do very much reading. We do classroom instruction, short readings and get the sermons done. So I don’t know what they do in Hom2. In my Creative Homiletics I probably should use a little bit more of that.

Me: I think you’re right at the Hom1 level it’s very much basic training. There’s a certain amount of beating it into them, maybe there’s a better analogy than that, to get them to do it.

GN: Here’s the way I put it. It’s not beating it into them. They don’t know enough yet to critically evaluate some else’s preaching.

Me: I understand that.

GN: I tell in my class you will learn how to do “a” way and you will do it three times. You will see me do it once. And when you’re done with that you will see a way to get a sermon ready to preach to the congregation and the preaching task. When your done then you get to your field ed or your vicarage or hear somebody else talk about it or see somebody else do it. Now you can adapt because you have something to work with. Before that you just wind up saying “I didn’t like it,” or “I’m going to preach this way,” or “Somebody told me this.” And it’s all bits and pieces, here and there. But now you have enough to actually reflect on what somebody else is doing.

Me: So, let's kind of go down now to the individual student and think of them on a class level. I think I heard you say earlier that you like teaching Hom1 because they come in eager to learn this. They think of it as important. And this isn't just another hoop they have to jump through in order to get through. That's pretty accurate for their attitude? Have you noticed any increase or decrease at that first class level in their interest in that preaching task over your years as a professor? Are they more or less or stayed about the same?

GN: I don't sense any great difference in their desire, attitude to be good preachers in Hom1. The Hom4 class, their final class, I get to teach in the winter and so that's a good thing, if it's in the spring they're really distracted with the call process, but in the winter they're kind of hunkered down in the cold weather and we get things done. What I try to do is make my class as engaging and participatory and involving and doing a lot of stuff and requiring them to preach a sermon in a congregational setting. I gear it so much into the preaching realm of where it can actually occur. So they produce two sermons for me in this 4th year class. One of them they have to preach in congregation and video tape it so we can look at it side by side. And the second one is a sermon you're going to preach in the future. And it can be their first sermon in their congregation, or something they have in fieldwork next month. So in both cases they are preparing something that's going to be in a pulpit.

Me: As you've looked at students across the years are there some key indicators or characteristics that you see in students that raises them to a level of somebody who's going to be really good, they have a pursuit of excellence in their preaching? What are some of things that have stood out to you, to say this guy's got something.

GN: It's not going to be noticed only in the homiletics class. He's going to be doing well in a variety of classes. The old conundrum is how much is this a gifted talent that you're born with and how much of it is nurtured and developed? The intriguing thing is when you get into professional athletes they have this incredible talent but they don't last long unless they are nurturing and developing and fine tuning it and working on it day, by day, by day.

The same thing is true with the preaching. I can have a really gifted preacher delivery wise, but he may not be putting in the effort behind the scenes. And his sermons suffer, even though for a person watching, they might go, whoa, he's really good. But I can see others, they've got a lot of growing to do because they're not very good public speakers, they're not very gifted at it, it's not their personality. And they're going to have to grow, need to get better. I've got some that are great students, gifted public speakers and they just stand out. They've got wonderful work ethic. So it's nothing I can predict, that I can say because this student does well in hermeneutics, they're going to suddenly be – or this student tests out in the Meyers-Briggs as an ENTJ – or something like that – they're going to be the better. It's seldom something like that. It's a more holistic package. And I try not to prejudice myself when I get a new class. I might ask somebody, what do you think about some of these students, and they say, oh, you better watch out for him. That

gives me a little indication. But on the whole I'm starting out, I'm expecting them to really do well. In my class every I want everybody to get an "A." Some don't. Typically the ones that are struggling are the ones that are – they really aren't that bright – I'll be just crass – they're really not that bright. The ones who struggle are the ones who are lazy. So if you want two or three things that right off the bat – first of all they just don't have the horsepower to produce strong sermons – secondly they could be lazy – and the third item is – you know if I were to put it as complex – insecurity and overconfidence. They're so insecure that they put on a bravado. "I know how to do this." People that don't want to learn aren't going to make it.

Me: Last thing then is, helping me think about the vicarage experience and carrying what they've received from the seminary forward. I guess we saw a little bit of this yesterday in the panel discussion, the change that you see in the student's preaching ability post-vicarage. How would you describe that? Is it significant?

GN: First of all they are more confident, because they've done it. That's not a bad thing. But it doesn't always turn out to be a good thing. You know, "I think I've got a good handle on this." And then I get them in the fourth year class and they say, remember, your just beginning. Let me show you my sermons from 1991 to 1997 from year to year. You haven't arrived anywhere yet. You might get a Masters of Divinity, but you haven't mastered anything yet. Even the best preachers continue to grow and get better. So one of the first things, coming off vicarage is this attitude that I've really made great progress. So, I'm a pretty good preacher. No, you're a pretty good preacher maybe. Yes, some of you are really talented. I had one student – incredibly talented.

Really, really talented, a great communicator. He was like two heads and shoulders above the rest of his class, but he was very teachable, there was a certain humility to him. So one of the things as they come off vicarage is to re-instill into them the humility and teachable spirit that they want to continue to grow. Second of all there needs to be a re-emphasis – once again they've learned how to do things efficiently because of a lack of time – but that efficiency hasn't always improved their homiletical skills. And so, I'll get sermons that don't have a goal anymore. There's no goal to it. And I sit down with them and ask, why did you preach this to me? I'll have sermons that are really light on the gospel, where's the gospel? And so some of the essential components that they learned in Hom1 or Hom2 have gone by the wayside and they have to be pulled back in again.

But in terms of having experience to draw upon when I teach that 4th year class now I've got some traction. In the Hom1 class they're just learning how to do it. In the 4th year class I've got some traction and we can talk about things that begins to relate back to the vicarage. But typically what's going to happen is it's going to be two-three years out in the parish when suddenly they start to realize that people aren't listening. What do I do here? What's going on? Is it their fault? And if they're good they'll say I need to do something.

Me: Here's our last question. Put yourself in that vicarage supervisor place, you have the opportunity to work one on one with an individual for 12 months where

would you start, what steps would you put in place, what might you do if you had that opportunity to do a one on one homiletics with a student?

GN: I'm not sure I'd do much different from what I do here. I would like to have a conversation with them about what text they're going to have – well first of all they're going to know what they're going to preach. Probably on a 4-6 month schedule they know when they are going to preach. Second of all I want to know what kind of text their going to be working with. I would have a very specific form, I can't get that for you, I call it Textual Application, in which they would give me a variety of things than what you see there. They tell me the text, content, what was the intent of it, what's going to be my sermon, what's the Law/Gospel dynamic that I could use, what's going to be the more central image or thread or repeated phrase and then they're going to give me a working structure. Tell me what stories they're going to use, for example. When they get that done, ok, it's got to be done by this time. And then we'll talk through the manuscript. Let's walk through it. Let me see how it sounds and then I'll let them preach it. I'm not going to sit in church with them and have them practice it. I'll have them preach it and I'll give them some feedback on it on delivery. And, for me, where I see some of the most significant role to mentor a student is when the exegetical work gets done, and they've got this sort of Law/Gospel thing they know they're supposed to do, but how are they going to put together the listenable material – the stories, the visual aids, the interaction, examples, metaphors, how is this all going to work together. How is this going to really connect with people in a way that is beneficial for them? And finally by the time that year is over, they're going to come back and they're going to know how to preach the gospel so that it's remembered. We just had the conference. Can people tell me what my resurrection cross - what did it have on the bottom?

Me: It's got an open tomb at the bottom.

GN: Can you tell me what I used in terms of the “talking rocks” phrase?

Me: The two brick pavers that you rubbed together. The stone was rolled away.

GN: So they'll know how to preach the gospel in a memorable way. Rev. Rossow started that with Preaching the Creative Gospel Creatively and it's very literary oriented. And I want mine to be more realistic, with all the sounds ...

Me: All that first article stuff we talked about in the conference. Woven together with all of our senses, eyes, ears, reason, and all of our senses.

GN: And to ignore those in the preaching task is to ignore his grace.

Me: That's a pretty powerful thought.

APPENDIX C – TRANSCRIPT OF DR. TODD JONES INTERVIEW

Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, MO. September 15, 2015.

Me: Thank you for meeting with me and we'll start out with the usual general introduction. Tell me about yourself, your educational background, what parish experience you had and then what you're doing on staff, what your teaching at Concordia seminary.

Todd Jones, I graduated from Concordia Seminary in 1989 with an MDiv. My vicarage experience was starting a Hispanic church in Englewood. It was a convertible vicarage. But in that vicarage the synod said, we're not going to send Anglos to Hispanic congregations so they sent me to a congregation in South Dakota. It was a larger congregation. There were two associates and no senior. We alternated preaching. From there – 5 years later – I got a call to Arkansas. It was a revitalization church and the congregation grew and planted a couple of Anglo churches and a couple of Hispanic churches and an Asian-Indian church. And then I was called to the mid-South District as the mission executive. At that point in time I was coaching revitalization churches throughout the country. The district called me to that full time for them. So I did that for five years before getting the call to come on faculty here.

I am part of the Homiletics Department. But I think it's more they had a gap they needed to fill. I'm very passionate about preaching. In fact I think its one of the most significant aspects of congregational health is how well the pastor preaches the word. So it is a passion of mine but it is not like something I've done advanced studies on. I've gotten a crash course since I came here. I spent a lot of time with Dave Schmitt and Glenn Nielsen, looking at their syllabus. I've sat in on Glenn's classes just to try to get up to speed mostly with what kind of language they use around here. Books I've read on preaching are typically evangelical in nature and much more communicator focused than preaching focused. That's my background in a nutshell.

Alright. We're going to start at the high elevation and then we're going to come down to lower individual student perspective on things. And so thinking about the bigger picture of the philosophy or approach that we take to homiletics how do you understand the definition and the purpose of preaching within our unique Lutheran context?

TJ: Gosh. We actually have of definition for Homiletics that we have to share with our students and I can't remember it now. But my own version would be communicating the Word of God, Law and Gospel, God's Word to God's people to encourage and challenge them to live out their Christian faith.

Again I emphasize more communication than proclamation, which is normally what we emphasize here.

Me: How do you distinguish those two – from proclamation to communication?

TJ: Communication is very hearer-centric. Proclamation is message-centric. I want, and I challenge my students, will the people you're preaching to understand and be able to apply what your saying. Do they get it or not. It's not good enough that you know it. It's, can you translate it into their world.

Me: So if you can stretch me into Hom 2 a little bit, because a lot of what I did in Glenn's interview was focus on that "boot camp" basic training in Hom 1.

TJ: Most of my work is in Hom 2, so they've done it. Twice I've taught Hom 1. Once a year I'll teach a section of it. I'm more of the Hom 2 guy. Hom 1 they've laid all the foundations and Hom 2 the distinction is taking that information and applying it to an Old Testament text, a miracle text, and a parable text, which can be unique challenges to new preachers. And then what they call here occasional preaching: weddings, funerals and the like.

And like Glenn I sit down with students one on one and evaluate their sermons. I evaluate them based on their content, their clarity, their engagement (part of clarity), then also based on application. That's the three rubrics I use. Some sermons are intended to be more content and less application.

Me: Kind of didactic rather than life change sort of goal they might have.

Me: You mentioned the evangelical – or this communication side vs. the proclamation side – as you think of that spectrum that exists out there in the church at large, how would you describe that spectrum and where would you see the typical product out of this institution falling on that spectrum?

TJ: I think the far end in terms of communication is entirely hearer-centric and so it has very little word content to it and it is more driven by what do the people want to hear. That's the worst case, what do people want to hear and how can I tell them in a way that's every entertaining and enlightening. So that would be the far extreme as a communicator. And the far extreme on the other side is I don't really care anything about the audience at all. In fact they kind of get in the way of this process. They're the kind of people who will read the sermon and it's very tight, theologically tight dissertation. And typically more doctrinal than Scripture because it's a systematic approach to Scripture. That would maybe be the extreme on the other side.

And I do think that we are close to the middle but lean more toward the proclamation perspective. Historically I think that is the case. We're more concerned about getting it right than about being heard.

Me: Alright so we did high elevation, now kind of coming down to the classroom level, if you want to talk more to the Hom 2 curriculum a little bit to describe what goes on in that class to prepare preachers for the pastoral office. Tell me about Hom 2 curriculum.

TJ: Hopefully you've gotten by now that every faculty member has wide breadth with what they want to do in their classroom. So there are in Homiletics there are a few metrics they have to hit, like Law and Gospel, Homiletical Plot in Hom 1, they do 2 sermons in Hom 1. In Hom 2 they have to do and Old Testament, Miracle, Parable and they have to do a wedding or a funeral, but beyond that they're wide open. In my Hom 2 class I emphasize communication so every week they have an oral presentation they have to give. And generally I don't give them advanced warning because I want them to be able to focus on the audience, the audience's hearing, and listening and gathering, so there's a lot of audience analysis and feedback while their preaching, so that when they're preaching is an organic communication process. So I deemphasize manuscript in Hom 2. They still have to submit a manuscript. And the student and I will sit down and go over the manuscript. But it's presented as an oral presentation for the class. All the assignments are orally presented because I want the emphasis on communication.

Me: So what are some of the oral assignments that would be typical for Hom 2?

TJ: I call it living lab. So sometimes it will be up on the video screen a student's name with a few verses. And you've got to come up with a five minute devotion and essentially what's the nut point you want to make from the text, why it's important to you and what do you want me to do with it. Three point outline. As a student is presenting the next name pops up. So each of them has about 5 mins to prepare for something coming up.

And then we'll add like – there has to be an object in the presentation. You have to use some thing you can find. We've actually done some of them outside, so something you can find, that you have to present. Or it's going to be a narrative – create a story around this parable – leading up to the parable. Tell that story not the parable. But the back story to the parable. Different exercises like that.

Me: How do the students like them?

TJ: They love them. And that's probably their favorite part of the course. Of course they dread the first time that I mention that. But now the student's have a good way of communicating, but the first couple of times I taught Hom 2, I know the shock and there's a few, a couple of students that have only done reading of their sermons, and it's very nerve wracking for them, their presentations are difficult and then when they actually have to give a sermon I have them do oral sermons of three of their sermons they do. It's very challenging. I don't let them take any notes. I'm more concerned that people understand what you're saying, even if you say one simple thing than if you're able to recite a manuscript.

We use a little, thin book, Preaching Without Notes to help get that, help them learn how to develop that concept. Also use some of Fickenscher's concepts – thinking in thoughts. That's what I've always used for preaching and he's actually put it down in a systematic way. And so I've used some of his stuff.

Me: Let's see. Their coming up out of Hom 1. They've been given some type of a process that they follow. Do you offer them any additional or keep them in the same methodology of - these are the steps I want you to follow to prepare a sermon? What are those steps in your mind?

TJ: I don't add any additional requirements from Hom 1. The challenge I have is that we have three Hom1 professors in addition to me and I rarely teach Hom1. And I really don't want my Hom1 students to take me for Hom2. Dave emphasizes structure. Glenn does not emphasize structure. He emphasizes illustration. And Ben Haupt emphasizes structure, but different structure than what is covered by Dave.

So it's challenging to integrate that. So basically they have to come up with an exegetical statement, a short exegetical statement. How they do that it doesn't matter to me, but you have to come up with that. You have to have a focus for your sermon and a function for your sermon.

Me: Talk to me a little bit about that. Hermeneutics is handled in another department. And then they come to Homiletics and you require them, you said, to give you an exegetical statement. What's your perception of how they're doing it - actually being able to mine that text?

TJ: Well, I actually walk them through the exegetical process but I don't require them to use an exegetical process, because the first time I taught Hom2 I didn't and I found that they were not doing exegetical work. So the first sermon I did, the first time I taught Hom2 I didn't have any requirement other than just an exegetical statement. And I got back, basically this is my idea for the text. And then my comments to them were where is this in the text? How did you get this from the text? And they weren't able to express that. So then from that point on we actually walk through an Old Testament text and I break down the layers, but it's a duplication of Hom1. But I'm hoping that will convince, yeah, I actually need to do this. I find that they still – if they feel pressed to write a sermon – the thing they will throw away is the exegetical work, which is the last thing you should throw away, but that's the first thing that they throw away.

Me: So walk me through one of those in whatever genre you want of an exegetical process.

TJ: I use, I think its seven, can't remember exactly, it's more a visual guide – seven layers, so you've got – you've identified your text – Gibbs calls that one layer – I don't – look at the text in the context of the entire Scripture – boil it down by layers from Scripture to the book – from the book to the chapter – from the chapter to verses – from the verses to the words.

As you filter through those layers you ask questions of the text. You think of what are some questions? What are some things that don't make sense? What are things that need to be explained further? But really you're trying to generate within yourself a spirit of

inquisition because it's in answering your questions that you actually develop ability to preach a message that people are interested in, because they're asking the same questions.

Me: So kind of from a canonical down to the specific of that text?

TJ: And the words within that text. The very bottom piece is the words of that text.

Me: I think you'd be really fascinated with that Pelton book that I mentioned because I, frankly, I don't think I was probably paying attention when I was in high school or college taking classes for example in literature and we started to talk about it, it was like, oh yeah I sort of remember that. I guess I should have paid closer attention that in a narrative text, the text has a structure to it that has character and setting, rising tension, the conflict, climax and then the resolution. And Pelton's observation is that the meaning of that text that the author was trying to convey is somewhere right there at the climax, resolution moment. So if you can analyze your text and lay out these pieces until you get to that you can then pull the idea. Now that doesn't mean you couldn't preach on other ideas that are down here in the setting or that are somewhere in the rising tension, but he makes a pretty convincing point that you ought to at least know that the main idea of the text is here and you're choosing to talk about this.

TJ: Right. That's why I tell the students you're exegetical statement can vary but it should have it's kernel the same, every time you go back to that text it's the same kernel at the heart of it. Because the text actually has one purpose, most times. You know, the didactic texts can have a little bit more variety, depth to them, but narrative in particular – there is a point for each parable – there is a reason for what was said. You don't have to preach on that reason, you can preach on a side issue but it needs to in some way acknowledge and support the main issue.

Me: It can't ignore it.

TJ: Right. So an example is the students in Hom2 every other cycle they go through one of the parables. The section is a collection of parables where it begins with Jesus saying, "who is greatest?" And one of the parables is the wandering sheep. I don't know how many students I have that have preached, or written sermon on, or turned in an exegetical statement on the lost sheep, that, that's the point. And I'll tell them, you notice it's not a lost sheep, it's a wandering sheep. And did you notice it actually has nothing to do with the sheep it's about the shepherd? So you notice what you have completely done? Ignored – your in Luke, not in Matthew. In Luke it's about the lost sheep.

Me: I had this experience with my second residency where we had to do a 20 minute narrative sermon. We could use 1st person, 3rd person, Lowry Loop, whatever with no notes which is not my thing, I'm still using – I would struggle in your class. And that's one of my goals in all this is to get better at that. It probably took me 6 hours of practicing to be able to do 20 minutes without that, and I don't always have 6 hours – but I preached on Jairus' daughter and the woman with the flow of blood.

And the point of my sermon was the focus on trusting Jesus – you know that Jairus and the woman were put in situations that they had to trust that Jesus knew what he was doing and my application was that a lot of times it doesn't look like God knows what he's doing but in Christ, because of the cross you know that you can trust him. I got all done, got and A, everything was fine, the class loved me. Then my mentor said, so Wally would you look at this text with me. Was this text really about Jairus trusting Jesus? I went, No! It was about Jesus not about Jairus. And that just put me back in that whole model again.

TJ: I've done it myself. I'll tell the students and when I mention it they'll say, oh I can't believe I'm such an idiot – and I say, I've done the same thing, but you always have to step back and say, am I really preaching this text, I've got a great sermon, but is it the text. Because I'm a big stickler on textual preaching. The only time they get a pass is when they do the wedding or the funeral and even then I prefer for them to be textual but I allow them to do something topical.

Me: This is kind of the last one in the big picture and it's almost kind of a little bunny trail for me and that's the question of encouraging students at the Hom2 level to perhaps study or listen to or read preaching from other traditions, outside of the Lutheran tradition. How do you feel about that?

TJ: I absolutely advocate it. I encourage them to go on line to watch – because again, I'm more of that oral visual presenter, emphasis. So, you know, Tim Keller, Matt Chandler, throw out a bunch of names. Younger guys that are having a lot of content – their sermons are content centeric – I encourage them to look for guys that are very – that have this deep meat – but they are able to communicate that meat at level that is engaging a younger congregation, a younger group of people. People that normally we would assume don't want a thing to do with God but their listening. Notice how these guys are able to do that and they're not compromising on their content.

Me: How do you see them responding, reacting to that?

TJ: I'll ask, are there other names and most of them will be able to spout four or five other names of people that they listen to regularly. I'm not that good at names, so I can't even remember some of them, but I've now got a list of about eight names that I recommend. Tim Keller's book on preaching that just came out on preaching, I think is a very good book. I may be using it this year in Hom2. It wasn't out for last year.

Me: It was in Keller's preaching in fact kind of launched me into what I'm doing now. At whatever moment in time, by whatever mechanism I found his preaching and I've been trying to kind of plant this seed around a little bit, so I'll see if it drops here as well. But it dawned on me that it's almost hypocritical for us as pastors to tell our people that they need to come every Sunday and listen to us because that's how faith is developed, that's how the Holy Spirit works in your life in part, is through the proclaimed word. And yet, we never listen to sermons. And even to the point where a couple of the students yesterday I was talking to in the panel

discussion, not listening to sermons on the text that you're preaching to see if you can get an idea from them or see how they did it. But just having some type of a regular steady diet of listening to somebody's preaching that actually feeds your soul. But I don't find very many pastors doing that.

TJ: Yeah in our Hom... I teach intro to pastoral ministry, that's my signature class that I teach. So I get two thirds of all the students in that class and then I get one quarter off, so a third are taught by somebody else. But in that course that's what I encourage them to do, is develop a worship life separate from their church. And so obviously if you're in a small town you can't go to somebody else's church like a Saturday night service. And there are unionism issues here but down load, subscribe to podcasts of good preachers and listen to sermons not just to pick up how do I preach better, but to be fed. You've got to do that.

Me: And then for me, it's been a challenge, I need to probably expand around a little bit more, but Keller just at the right moment, at the right time, and I've probably listened to 3-500 of his sermons. And it's almost my morning devotional. I run for about 45 minutes or ride my bicycle and that's what I do, I listen. And it's amazing to me the crossover when I'm just listening to preaching in general where ideas then start to come for the text that I'm working on from the word being proclaimed to me. So thank you for sharing that with me.

TJ: I agree. I think it's an important thing.

Me: Alright, so we're going to come from the big, high elevation, down to the class, now maybe to think a little bit more about the individual students that you're seeing in the classroom. What priority do you sense students are attaching to the preaching task in their overall training for the pastoral ministry? Where are they ranking it?

TJ: I think it's one of the top issues for them. It could be because they generally believe that that's really what the pastor does, or it could be because it's a visible aspect of their ministry, so it's something their wife will see and they'll be judged. Their family's going to see that. So there are a lot of reasons for it but I think probably the top priority for students.

The problem with students is though – there's two classes – the student who definitely wants to preach but doesn't know how – and the student who desperately wants to preach and thinks he's got it all. And the challenge is that those two are sitting in your room and sometimes the guy who does know it all really does know it all.

Me: It's obviously a developmental process into preaching and you're never finished. I hope they leave here knowing that they have only just begun, they haven't mastered anything yet, but, what's your take on, or perception of how well they're actually grasping the homiletical theory that's being taught to them in the class?

TJ: I tend to be pretty pessimistic about it. Dave Schmitt told me this and Glenn kind of said it in as many words. The students come in with an idea, a perception of what it is to be a preacher and that's what they go out with. It requires something outside of here to challenge their perception and then they begin to remember back and then they start to think, I guess that's what they meant by this. They'll change and preach the way we want them to preach when they're in our classroom but when they go on vicarage from the feedback we get from the vicarage pastors is that they kind of just revert to whatever it is they came in with. So it seems like their pastor coming in had much more to do with their homiletic development than what they get here.

Me: And I guess that's kind of what some of this is about, is trying to discover how I as a vicarage supervisor become more well acquainted with exactly what they're being equipped with when they come so that when I know work with them for 12 months one on one I'm trying to reinforce things that they've been taught

TJ: Shortly after I got here I had a vicar. I was a supervisor for two years – two vicars. And I had two SMP students and they were using terms like 2KR and focus/function. And I didn't know what it was. So when I got here on faculty that's one of the things I talked to Glenn and Dave about. Do you guys ever do like a workshop for vicarage supervising pastors on how do you critique and evaluate, because I think that's what needs to happen. That needs to be more intentional.

Me: When you look at individual students, what are some of the key indicators that you've got a good one, a preacher here who could be developed?

TJ: Somebody that looks you in the eye when they talk to you and somebody that's able to tell a good story and somebody that's a good student of the Word, so that they ask good questions or they put together good thoughts about Scripture. They're able to drill down into the Scripture and come up with the center truth. This is what it's about.

This is coming down to the end of this and I don't know, have you had opportunity yet to see students from your Hom2 class come back from vicarage? Do you notice – what differences do you notice post-vicarage from what you saw before?

TJ: I probably don't notice anything so much in terms of homiletics. I talked to one student – who was one of my more challenging students because he was one who always had the idea before he really looked at the text and when we were talking about vicarage – I didn't initiate that conversation – but he was one of the students who said – I got to a point where I appreciated the fact that I needed to read the text! He said – because he was preaching every week in his vicarage – it was set up so that it was three services and one of them was him – he said after about five weeks I had no more ideas! I didn't know what I was going to preach on, so I had to go back into the text and he said I didn't really appreciate that as much. Good to hear him say.

Me: Here's my last question – the wrap up.

So put yourself in my place, you've done this as a vicarage supervisor in the parish where you were, but thinking about having 12 months of one on one time in the area of preaching, where would you start and what steps would you do if you were to lay out an intentional 12 month process for a vicar in their vicarage year?

TJ: Well, my PhD is actually in high performance teams. So its on how do you help people, how do you train people to be better at what they do. So it's frame working on that. So the first step is assess. And the reason that's important is having a set plan isn't going to work because each student is going to have a different deficiency. So I think the first thing I'd do is spend a month or 3 or 4 sermons, however often they preach to assess what are the weaknesses, what do you see as the growth areas and then collaborate with the student to develop a growth plan to address those issues.

I like my framework, but whatever framework you want to use, is it textual, is it engaging, and is it applicable. That's my own, you may have other frameworks you would use.

Me: Would you say those three things then would be your criteria for assessing them in that first month?

TJ: Yes. That's what I would do. So develop your own framework if you want.

Me: That's very helpful. The application of what you said your doctoral work is in helping people become better fits really nicely into what I'm trying to think about here. So maybe even tapping into that a little bit more as I go along through this. I had the thought, so how do you assess them? Is there some type of a question and answer process or do you just have to watch them do it two or three times and then have a matrix or grid of some kind – I like the one you just offered.

TJ: That's what I do with it. Their first day of class they make their first presentation and that's when I do my initial assessment using that three point grid system. There's a lot of ways of making it more complicated but simplicity is the best thing.

Glenn has said you make Law and Gospel part of that grid. But to me that's part of the content. Is the law there? Is the gospel there? Although I'm more focused on being textual than anything else.

I think three is something I can manage. So that's what I would recommend.

Me: So is there in that particular model or framework – does it deal with both people who have lets say natural ability?

TJ: That's part of that assessment. So let's say – the challenge with that HPT training is you have modules that you developed in training, you've envisioned in training, but you don't pick the modules until the assessment phase is done. Then you have something you've identified. The student might have something they've identified. And then you

begin to pull out modules and say we're going to work on this, this and this based off of that.

So, natural ability is one of those assessment pieces. So you're a naturally gifted talker and maybe not that good at interpreting the Scripture. Or your very good at interpreting Scripture and you're a good talker how can we help you get better. What are some next steps, get better points?

Me: I really appreciate you taking the time. And I think we'll have opportunity to talk some more.

TJ: I've really enjoyed it.

APPENDIX D – TRANSCRIPT OF FOURTH YEAR STUDENT PANEL DISCUSSION

Me: What we want to do first of all is take a minute for each of you to get acquainted. If you will, tell us your name of course, and then where your vicarage placement was and a little bit about what that congregation was like.

Student A: I did my vicarage in W. Missouri or Missouri-a. We worshiped anywhere from 7-750 a weekend. Kind of a rural congregation, I would say. W. is 14,000, so it's a small town feel and yet at the same time it's a city feel.

Me: Excellent. And...

Student B: I did my vicarage in S, CA. Congregation is about 400 and we have communion on a Sunday, average, about 400, because of tourism, which is kind of bizarre and unique aspect of that area. It's a beach community, six blocks from the beach, somebody has to serve there – might as well be me. The congregation was great. Great relationship with my supervisor. Church was very gospel focused, which is kind of weird to say, but it was. I got to really be loved on and I loved that church.

Me: Excellent. Student A and Student B and...

Student C: I did my vicarage in B, AL. It's a suburb of the city of B. Interesting thing was – born and raised in the Midwest I thought I was going to go to the deep south and be kind of culturally unaware of what to do, what's going on, but there's a lot of transplants from the Midwest because of work initially with steel and now with the medical industry. So the congregation – lots of people from Michigan, Indiana, Ohio – so I fit in very well actually very comfortably. A lot of people commuted even though we were in a community – a lot of people commuted from almost 30 minutes to 45 minutes – at the most. So a lot of – just a variety of people – lawyers, doctors, blue collar, factory workers – just a wide variety of people. Worshiping about 250, 275 at the most at two Sunday morning services. But like Student B, just a wonderful congregation, very open, welcoming, and gospel centered.

Me: Do you guys know off the top of your head how many vicars preceded you, where were you in the line of number of vicars that congregation had had?

Student A: I was seventh.

Student B: I was the first in 25 years.

Student C: I was the first in about 20 years.

Me: So remember we're focusing on the preaching task of your vicarage experience. I want to start with this – take a moment and describe what your typical method of preparing a sermon was – what steps did you follow as you got ready – let's do this,

when you got ready for that very first sermon, how much time did you have to prepare it and what was the process you followed in getting ready for it. Let's start with Student C.

Student C: In terms of time, it wasn't so much my supervisor limiting or telling me how much time I had – I would give myself a week and on that Monday when I was going to preach, I would put together the worship service for the Sundays that I preached. So on Monday I often times worked diligently to get the service set with hymns. So that was for me the start of my sermon preparation. Identifying, normally, most always the lectionary readings and choosing hymns that went with that. And a combination of the readings, the hymns, is where I started with my sermon preparation. And then from that point forward I wasn't always diligent, I didn't always accomplish the sermon writing as punctually as I wanted to. My goal was always Wednesday to have the main bulk of it completed or formulated, but often times I wouldn't have it until Thursday and would get some form of a manuscript to my supervisor no later than Friday so that he had an opportunity to read through it, make sure that it was law/gospel, Christ-centered, Kosher, I guess for the congregation so that Friday I could spend my Friday and Saturday as much as I needed to or wanted to, to continue to revise edit and prepare for the delivery on Sunday mornings.

Me: Student B, what did you do, preparing, time wise, what were your steps?

Student B: For the first one?

Me: Yes. Start with the first one and then how did it progress over the course of the year?

Student B: Ok. The first one my supervising pastor really just let me focus on the sermon. He helped plan the service and do all that, as opposed to Student C. So I really just got to focus on what the text was and how I was going to preach it. He really desired for me to just talk to him about my thoughts. I didn't actually wind up turning anything in to him before I preached it. But he really wanted to discuss with me what my ideas were, where I was going to go, the types of imagery I was going to use, maybe the type of object I was going to use. So that was kind of creative process and that was nice, bouncing off ideas and working hand in hand with him. My first sermon I wrote a manuscript. My supervisor and I have very similar personalities in the sense that we like public speaking. I have a background in theater. He wanted me to get outside my comfort zone, actually outside the pulpit and to try preaching outside the pulpit. So that was actually my first experience preaching outside the pulpit because he saw that in me. Somebody who was ok being up front, being ok out from behind the pulpit and really just engaging more conversationally with the parish. So the first one I actually wrote a manuscript. From then on he helped me find my voice in preaching and my voice was not written. It was really outlined. He helped me discover a way to outline my sermons that really worked with my voice as a preacher. So towards the end of my vicarage I actually didn't write out manuscripts. I wrote out outlines. I actually found a new method for myself for outlining sermons. I have a 4'x4' whiteboard, because I'm a very visual person, and so I can visually look and track my sermon on my whiteboard, taking pictures of it so I've got it

on my phone. It was kind of a fluid creative process working with my supervisor. And as I got going further and further on my vicarage he wanted to know less and less. It was really after I preached that we really sat down and discussed it. What – nitty gritty – what was good, what was bad. Most of the time he said, these are things that the parish will never see or realize went wrong or went well. They got to hear the gospel, hear some law, hear the gospel, but really as preachers what do we want to work on. And for me it was flow. He really helped me with the flow of my sermon and that's where I got with the whiteboard, I really got to see my flow, the flow of my sermon, the way the point, that main point tracked through my sermon.

Me. Thank you. It sounds like it was much more interactive with your supervisor. Student A, what did you do?

Student A: I knew going into mine – I was told upfront – you're going to be very busy. I said, that's great, keep me out of trouble. So I forced myself, that first sermon, not to spend a month preparing it because I knew that was not what I was going to have. I on average preached 2-3 times a month and in Lent more. But on regular Sundays, two to three. I would start looking at the text Sunday and I would get an outline and keep going over it, writing it in my head. And then I would have to have it done by Thursday because we would read our manuscript, or at least record them on mine because they went to a radio broadcast. So I had no choice but to write a manuscript, because pastor was going to be out there in radio land, and he wanted to make sure we honed it. So I would have a manuscript usually by Wednesday. During that time process I also had the task of doing the liturgy, so as I'm writing my sermon in my head, I'm thinking about what I was doing in the liturgy, then I would create the liturgy and go ahead and type my orally written manuscript in my head, hand it in. He would go over it and chat, maybe a half hour. I would finalize it. I would record it. I would preach it and then we would come back after the service was over that Monday and we would go over how we felt it went. It got to the point at the end where we had a trust. Sometimes how you wrote your manuscript wasn't how it would come out of my mouth and so he would say, I put a question mark here because on the manuscript it looks kind of weird but I know what you are trying to say. It was a lot of good experience.

Me: I want you to back up a bit before the manuscript and interacting with the supervisor and talk to me a little bit about what your steps, study time, processes were for mining the text and coming up with your idea and developing your thought. Student A, where did that part start of actually working in the text?

Student A: Sunday. I would read the text over and over, usually read it right before I went to bed. I think best sometimes when I'm just sitting there with nothing else to think about. I read the text and think about it for a couple of days. Then I would do my – I'm a big hermeneutics person – I would dive into the language – Greek or whatever – Old or New Testament – Hebrew, read commentaries, let that bubble for another day and by Tuesday, Wednesday, I would have what I wanted to say and then I'd go over it and over it, and then I would finally put it on paper and then he would check it.

Me: So, formulating a theme statement? Or I heard outlining was a way that you did that?

Student A: Focus, function. Means and remedy and all that.

Me: Your process for studying the text?

Student B: It was when I got it I started. Especially at the beginning of my vicarage, I had a couple of weeks between sermons, towards the end there I was preaching quite a bit, but at the beginning ... I really got to spend some time in it. So if I had two weeks to do it, the first week I'd just spend time reading it over and over and over again, praying about it. And then once the week came around I got in the – languages are difficult for me – so I'd use my resources, my commentaries, stuff like that – that's when I'd really get into the books and start figuring out, what's going on there? What are they saying, what's Jesus saying here? And then as that happened, probably around Thursday or Friday – throughout the week I'd write things – well before I had this whiteboard – pieces of paper, ideas, thoughts – and as they didn't seem relevant, I'd cross them out. I start to figure out this main idea that I'm trying to get at with all these thoughts and ideas. Then finally I start outlining it, probably Thursday, Friday. Through that whole process, talking with my supervisor, thinking about the direction I think I'm going to go and then start practicing it, Friday, Saturday, start speaking it out loud, recording it on my phone, listening back – oh, I didn't like the way I said that, I like that. And really using the recording as my manuscript.

Me: Student C, what did you do study wise, background, get ready?

Student C. Like I said that the process started for me with putting the service together. Growing up I really appreciated when the hymnody and themes in the hymn would coincide with points that the pastor was saying. So that was the start of the meditation of the Scriptures, Scripture readings for me. So after that point, like Student B, I know the languages, but not to just sit there and translate the whole passage. So I'd use commentaries. I found it helpful, or if nothing else, interesting to listen to recordings of other sermons on the same text. Either through iTunes U and it being a Concordia Seminary professors or just straight up Googling sermons on that passage and seeing what other preachers from other denominations, what they preached on, what they get from the text. To have a perspective of where other people were coming from, especially at the beginning. I got a better understanding of the congregation toward the end after being there for a year, obviously, but where were people in the congregation going to be approaching that text? So those various things as well as sometimes a text was more challenging to me than others I would sit down with my supervisor and tell him, these are the verses, or the themes or ideas that are really sticking out to me, but I'm not quite sure how to put it together. He was very helpful in not just repeating a typical sermon I've heard on the text but taking those ideas that I've found important and putting them together. So I used a whole range of resources and different ways to study. Most of this last year on vicarage was me finding my voice as a preacher. I still have more work to do to develop that, but I was kind of haphazard. I wasn't really consistent in one style

because there seemed to be other ways of doing it that I didn't know if they were better or worse for me.

Me: Thank you. It's very helpful to hear what your different processes were. Those of you who did manuscripts and the deadline before you preached sounded like got pretty close to the actually day of preaching? And yours was similar? How long before you preached was your manuscript due to your supervisor?

Student A: I usually handed it to him Thursday and then I recorded Thursday night, or sometimes Friday, but Friday would be...

Me: Did you get a lot of feedback on your manuscripts where they responded back to you or gave you suggestions on how to say things?

Student C: My supervisor, and it was instrumental for me, since what I needed to hear from my supervisor was what I had written, what was in my sermon was good, it was sound. His feedback if nothing else, helped boost my confidence that I can actually stand up in the pulpit and preach. But also to craft and hone it certain areas of my sermon that I get – not preachy – I maybe use too many examples, or I use good examples for myself, but specifically for the congregation there were better things. So he helped streamline my sermon and that's what a lot of the comments I received from my supervisor were.

Me: So here, we'll finish up on prep work here and then I want to talk about delivery. In your prep work choosing, deciding on a specific structure that you were going to use to try and convey the idea that you've drawn out of the text. How did you go about deciding on a structure? Did you fall into a set pattern of a structure that you tended to lean toward? How much variety of structure would you say used on your vicarage?

Student A: I used a lot text-application. So I would bring them to the text, explain the text and then apply it to their lives and then do the means and malady – goal, malady, means. Sometimes I would get out the old David Schmitt book and try some different structures here and there. I tried to keep it simple just because I was thrown into a lot of preaching right away so I stuck with text-application and built that up real strong and maybe when I get a call I can get stronger on another structure.

Me: And was your supervisor active with you in trying to choose other structures or was that pretty much your thing?

Student A: That was my thing. He was more of the content.

Me: Student B what was your experience with the structuring? I know, you've got the whiteboard...

Student B: ... which made the structures a little bit more fluid with ... the text really set my structure which was kind of cool. One week I did more of the evangelical bible study

style, still with law/gospel application, but more of the bible study style. But I really let the text kind of find that style, that outline for me or the topic. We did several sermon series.

Me: Excellent. Good. Structures?

Student C: I ended up being pretty stagnant in terms of variety of structures. When I found the structure I worked best with and I enjoyed the most I stuck with it. That was one of the critiques or evaluations, was working at being a more dynamic preacher, more variety in terms of how I engaged the congregation in my sermon. Not just delivery, but content and structure. But it was not the fault of my supervisor, I'm sure I could have asked him for more help in other kinds of structures. I felt like I was doing it well, so I stuck with it without much concern at the time for how do I bring more variety in? So it was a decision he left up to me and I chose to just find one thing that work well for me.

Me: So here's the last one. If there was one thing your supervisor could have done more of that would have been helpful to you in your sermon preparation, can you think of something that would have been helpful to you in your prep time, from your supervisor?

Student C: For me, it's not that we didn't do it, we certainly talked about the text that I would be preaching on for that Sunday but I think if we had tried to find a more regular meeting time to study the Scripture readings for that day. Just so that I would have been able to more naturally talk through it with him rather than talking with him about it post writing or post preaching of the sermon. I think I benefit here on campus and in class talking with classmates and professors about various Scripture passages. And I think had I insisted on that or my supervisor made that more of an important element of sermon preparation that I would have benefited from that kind of shared – being able to process – process

Me: ... out loud vs. just thinking about it, which is different styles. Anything? I saw you saying, no you were good?

Student A: I don't know - we – I'm the kind of person that if I don't get something I'll just get up and walk to his office and say, hey pastor, what do you think? And so, he really didn't have to, we had the meetings before manuscript and after delivery, but basically throughout the whole process he was very open and free and I just talked to him and that was very helpful communication on his part.

Me: Ok. We're going to shift from preparation to delivery. And you've already touched on that a little bit. But, what did your supervisor require of you in terms of delivery? Were you allowed to use a manuscript? Did you use a pulpit or were you encouraged to get outside of the pulpit? Did you practice your delivery in front of your supervisor before you delivered your message? Putting that all together, think about how did you move into the delivery of your sermon?

Student C: I, he gave me a lot of latitude in terms of manuscript, no manuscript. If I wanted to stand in the pulpit or be on the floor around the baptismal font in the front. While I had that – those options – I chose to stay in the pulpit, use the manuscript because that's what I was most comfortable with. He did have me, pushed me a few times, which was helpful, which was also what I needed to not use a manuscript. I got very nervous and so he only pushed me as far as an outline, which I appreciated him trying to broaden my experience, and what I tried without throwing me into the fire. I had options there but I chose the manuscript and the pulpit 99% of the time.

Me: Any other things – inside the pulpit, outside – did you practice it on your own or in front of your supervisor.

Student C: I would practice sometimes at my apartment, but also at church in the sanctuary, in the pulpit, but it was never in front of anyone before Sunday morning, which when I think about it, there would be pros and cons to that. I didn't have as much of a fear of being in front of people so it wasn't quite necessary for me to be in front of other people when I was practicing. But I would practice for quite a few hours Saturday afternoon, especially, so that I could hear how it was coming from the manuscript through my voice, how other people would hear it. But he didn't require me to preach it in front of him. I think in some ways it might have been helpful but I think I would have just been terrified to do it just for one person, my supervisor at the time. Maybe you two had different experiences. But that would probably not been so comfortable for me.

Me: What did you experience for your delivery?

Student B: I didn't get a chance to preach a lot while I was here my first three years. I preached actually three times in three years here. My supervisor knew that I perform on the side, I guess you could say, I do some acting. So it was trial by fire, because you have this experience, I want you to get outside your comfort zone. Before, when I was here I preached from the pulpit, I had the manuscript. He was – I'm going to push you because I know you can do that, to be ... knowing you the little bit that I do, that that would suit your personality more and your style more. It was terrifying! I didn't have a manuscript, didn't have an outline. I tried to memorize the manuscript I had written which was an awful idea. Because I tried to recall the exact words I had on the page and that really didn't work. It ended up coming out less ... (me: authentic?) ... yeah, less me. Even though I had written what I put on the paper. And so he said, I really want you to try this. The church was used to that, that's what he does. And so I said, ok, I guess I have to listen to my supervisor – that's what Dr. Nielsen said! So, here we go. I practiced it a ton, like three days, Thursday, Friday, Saturday, I just practiced it all the time, all the time. It went well, but that was really ... because I think that he saw that in me ... I don't think if he didn't see that in me I don't think he would have pushed it as hard as he did. He saw in me that that was my style, that was my voice and he was really helping me find that voice. And I really hadn't had time to work on that while I was here, finding my preaching voice. I didn't have to practice it in front of him. He just said, we'll talk about it afterwards. All of them were recorded so he said, make sure you sit down and watch it. See what you liked and didn't like and we'll talk about it. And that was really helpful for

me, to actually see myself, because when I do shows they don't often record those so I don't get to see myself, but in this case I did. It was really helpful. And I think that would be helpful whether you're in a pulpit or not in a pulpit, just to see – am I making an angry face when it's a happy situation – am I making weird gestures while I'm talking. So that was very helpful.

Me: Alright. And for you manuscript, no manuscript, in the pulpit, out of the pulpit?

Student A: No manuscript, out of the pulpit, memorized. I just remember I was taught by David Schmitt and then Todd Jones and all of them were about oral preaching without notes and they said they would find me if they found out that I wrote a manuscript orally and then used a manuscript – they said they would find me and get me! So I took him on his word and I took a leap of faith and said I'm going to try and do this so that's why I memorized everything orally and actually one of the professor said, once you get to the point where you can look out – and have rhetorical units in your handbag, just in case it's not going well. I got to the point where I could have some handbag rhetorical units and it wasn't really connecting to the people like I thought I could unplug, plug in and no one would ever know. So that's what I was trying to do toward the end and it seemed to work well. My supervisor and I talked about that a lot – what are you going to try and do if it doesn't go well. Orally, no manuscript, I walked around with purpose – the first time I didn't – and we talked about that at length!

Me: Pacing, back and forth?

Student A: Yes. That's not good. But just being nervous... but when I finally found my preaching voice, or whatever we want to call it I felt better and I could move around. I would usually memorize it – I would never practice my sermon until I was practicing where I would actually deliver it, that way when I would move around it would help me memorize my rhetorical units. Like usually I'm about right here for this rhetorical unit, and I'm very kinesthetic.

Me: You mentioned recordings, was that that pretty regular for you that you watched yourself? And then did your supervisor ever sit and critique with you?

Student B: No. It was just the first one. He didn't say you did anything wrong. He just said I think it would be beneficial if you watch yourself. Our church records them all, puts them on YouTube and Facebook. So that was easy to do for me.

Me: And it was helpful to you.

Student B: Yes. I didn't do it all the time but when something felt funny or it felt good. I actually used a dog in one of my sermons and I wanted to see, because people were laughing at the dog, and I wanted to see what they were laughing about. I went back and watched and said, ok, that felt a little off. I wanted to see why it felt off, which was very helpful for me. But my supervisor never sat in and critiqued it together.

Me: How about you guys, did you ever record, did you watch yourselves?

Student C: They recorded, but just audio. I have no idea if my supervisor ever listened to the recordings of my sermon after the fact. We would certainly sit down and talk about it either Monday or directly after the service, closing up the church to go home for the day we would chat about how things went and what he thought. But I don't know about recordings. I would listen to them, as well. I hardly have ever heard myself in a recording, so the first couple of times it was incredibly strange. Who is that guy? It was helpful. Sometimes in sermons where I felt like I just didn't communicate anything, I couldn't bring myself to listen to them. But I was often times interested when people said, that was a really great sermon what did they hear, what did I say that made them respond. So I would listen to those sermons. So I think recordings can certainly be helpful, but they were more personal reflection than with my supervisor.

Me: Yours was radio broadcasted, did you ever listen to your broadcast?

Student A: I always listened to it after I was done before we sent it, just in case. It was hard to listen to my voice, recorded. It was like, man, what is that?

Me: Like the last question on the preparation section, if there was something your supervisor could have done with regard to delivery is there anything you wish that he would have pushed you to do, or that maybe you would have experienced that you didn't have opportunity to do in regards to your delivery?

Student A: I never preached in a pulpit. I just don't like the pulpit. It's just not my style and he knew that and his wasn't either. It was kind of never used. So one day I thought maybe I should use it. Nah.

Me: Anything delivery wise, Student B that your supervisor could have done?

Student B: My supervisor and I had – both of us in this specific church setting – preach outside the pulpit, but we really talked about the people your preaching to. If that's going to be a problem for the people you're preaching to, preach from the pulpit, if that's really going to be a stumbling block for them. So you have to know the people. But in this specific case the people were ok with it. I got to actually preach at several different churches during vicarage because I was the only vicar in San Diego and so I got to preach ... and most of those churches were outside of the pulpit style churches.

Me: Anything your supervisor could have done for you delivery wise?

Student C: Not that he could have done, but he did do, was that he created a opportunity for me to go and preach at another church and this church I think there were 25 members, 25 people in the pews that day. And so he gave me an opportunity to experience a very small worship setting that I otherwise had never really experienced. So he gave me that opportunity. He gave me lots of opportunities. I was probably just a little too stubborn to

take advantage of the different encouragements to preach outside the pulpit, preach without a manuscript. I was just ... I guess he probably could have pushed me a little bit harder and said I am the supervisor so you're going to do it this way. He was very accommodating which I appreciated but because I was pretty well set in my ways, I didn't take advantage of those opportunities.

Me: Just a couple more as you think about your fourth year, any topics, books, focuses for homiletics that you're thinking about for your fourth year that you're going to direct attention to? What do you think Student A?

Student A: I'm directing attention to structures – so I can learn more structures and then I want to know more rhetorical units for my handbag so I want to get more creative ways to illustrate things, maybe encompassing art or stuff like that. I always had stories and explanation and different rhetorical units like that but never, rarely used a physical item. I heard, obviously there are ways you can do that. Children's message I did but not for an actual delivery in church, which, why not?

Me: So, adding some variety of styles to your structures and those rhetorical units. What are you focusing on for the fourth year in homiletics?

Student B: Honestly, just finding opportunities to keep preaching. I don't think I'll ever find my voice, but keep working on the style and trusting in the Spirit. Finding as many opportunities as I can. Unfortunately with the way the seminary is going to semester, I don't have an opportunity to take more than one Hom course. So I'm just trying to get as much experience as I can.

Me: Anything for fourth year?

Student C: Yes. I had mentioned in my report work at being more dynamic preacher. So for me it's not in structures it's the whole sermon, homiletic task and preaching on Sundays. I haven't looked ahead at the course schedule to know what Hom classes I can take. But I definitely want a class, something to do that would get me out of my comfort zone and help me study the different kinds of structures and varieties and ways of being more dynamic in my preaching.

Me: So the same question but now push it out after graduation, ordination have you thought about how you're going to continue to develop and grow your preaching ability after your done with this formal training part? Have you thought about that?

Student B: As much as I can, watching other preachers. Whether they preach with a manuscript, they preach in a pulpit, outside the pulpit, just watching other preachers and really learning how they do it and maybe engaging them in a conversation, what's you're prep like? Because we have a Hom class and you learn prep, but there's all sorts of different types of preparation so what works for you. And so maybe take pieces of that and really let that hom education continue. Listening to other people, watching other people, talking to other people, you guys about your styles and engaging with you and

your styles. That's something I got to do a little bit on vicarage, reach out to some other pastors that I knew were similar styles to me and even different styles from me and say, what's your preaching like? How do you do it? That might not be for me but you know you don't stop learning.

Me: Anything come to your head?

Student C: For me I think the biggest way that I will learn is just by the repetition of doing it. I had a few more opportunities than Student B in the two years before vicarage to preach but I learned especially with preaching that I get better, I learn more as I actually preach rather than just read or talk with someone about it. The best way for me to learn is to actually be up in the pulpit, be up front preaching a sermon. So at least initially it's going to be that task of preaching every Sunday that gets me learning more, becoming more dynamic, but certainly listening more to other preachers. I've talked with other students on campus who say that's what they do and they find a lot of value out of that. I experienced some of that on vicarage but I think either listening or reading other sermons rather than other theological books – read a collection of sermons – would be helpful in some way. I think also it will depend greatly on my ministry context. And if I am out in the plains, or middle of nowhere Idaho, or still somewhere close to St. Louis, that's going to affect my opportunities to connect with other pastors. So I don't have a set plan for how I plan to go about doing it but I think first and biggest thing for me will be the actually preaching on Sunday.s

Student A: Keeping a relationship with professors and pastors. I called a lot of people during vicarage, professors here. I'm weird, I actually talk to professors sometimes on the side. Sometimes if I was preaching on the Holy Spirit I would call Professor Sanchez, I know he's an expert on that. There was a text I couldn't quite get. I talked with my supervisor already and I wanted a little more. I called Dr. Voelz or Gibbs. I would just call and say, hey, I'm working on this, what do you think. I called other friends who were seminarians and say you know are you working on the same pericope, are you doing this, what are you doing? I think I will always use communication with my fellow pastors and friends, brothers and sisters in Christ, professors, that's why they're here.

Me: You guys all alluded to it, and this is my last question for you, in thinking about listening to or reading other's sermons, other pastor's sermons, do you do that regularly and if you do whose sermons are you reading and listening to? Do you have a favorite? Is there somebody who really has been – caught your attention – in terms of speaking to you as you think about their preaching style?

Student B: I don't know if there is one specifically.

Me: How often would you say you listen to or read another pastor's sermon?

Student B: I would say I probably listen to two or three per sermon I write.

Me: And usually on the same text as you were preaching?

Student B: Yes. And that's why it kind of varies, Lutheran, non-Lutheran to see what they were preaching that was wrong or they were preaching that was right.

Me: Any experience with that listening to or reading?

Student A: Usually reading, but it was more of a content thing. What's been done in the past? What's been done on this text before? What have you heard from this text before? I would never go out and purposefully listen to other sermons.

Student C: A lot like Student B. I started doing that much more frequently. So as of yet I don't have a specific person that I go to all the time in terms of sound theological content. I always went to iTunes U and the chapel sermons from the seminary, I felt were reliable sermons to listen to in terms of variety and content. And then I inherited a number of books from my dad, his theological library, so the various sermon collections that he had in his library I would peruse through and if there was one on there, depending on what lectionary you were in, the text wasn't always there but two to three maybe four sermons for each one that I wrote.

Questions from the group repeated by me to the students:

Me: He's asking you to rank the value of your experience on vicarage in the area of preaching.

Student C: I think for me it's where I learned most, certainly. Preaching wasn't the task for the pastor that energized me the most, but I certainly learned the most from preaching and having the frequency that I didn't before to improve and to do it. But for me it wasn't the most valuable experience. For me it was relating to the church members in other forms, through Bibles studies and other church functions.

Student B: I guess for me it was – because I didn't get to preach a lot. I got to do a lot of other stuff at my fieldwork church, but I didn't get to preach a lot so for me that was – I really enjoy preaching. I got to preach a lot more.

Me: In terms of all the other experiences on vicarage where would you rank preaching in terms of how valuable it was?

Student B: I mean it was up there – but I don't think it was drastically because – just getting to see the life that you guys live everyday was a big learning experience. So just getting to do everything. I got to do a lot which was awesome.

Student A: I think learning how to schedule was very big and making sure – my supervisor gave me quite a bit of freedom, but he also gave me a little piece of paper that said, I expect you to do all these things. He was very straightforward and I appreciated that so to try and categorize them... I preached quite a bit so preaching was very valuable because now I feel a little more confident and now I can hit the ground maybe limping, if

not running... Shut ins, being one on one with people ... Confirmation ... Bible study. Preaching I would say was the most formative over all.

Me: And all those parish experiences fed back into the sermon prep and into the delivery and into the writing as you got to know people. Any others?

Me: Repeat for the sake of the recording: By the end of vicarage did you feel like you were actually preaching to the issues and to the people in the pew, relating the text to them, or were just telling them what the text said?

Student A: Definitely toward the end, at least in my experience – maybe midway it started becoming more of – instead of me preaching strictly what was in the text and trying to relate it – I got to know the people - we had a pre-service, like 15 minute greeting time and I would go out and shake hands and I got to know people and they'd come ask me questions and through Bible study – I got a feel for what people were struggle with and the community, what was going on in the community. And that really helped with the latter half of my vicarage to be more effective in delivering what communicated with them.

Student B: Just getting in their lives – going out to lunch. I took – actually they took me out to lunch. But I went to lunch with all the elders and the Board members, just to get to know them, their thoughts, their opinions. That was really neat. The first few sermons my supervisor definitely helped me with what's the church actually going through – I don't know these people yet.

Student C: I had a similar experience. That was for me one of the most valuable things about vicarage. The fact that it's a year long, you have the opportunity to become invested in the congregation and get to know their needs. So even though Student B only preached three times at his field work church or three times before leaving, field work, there's different levels of involvement, so... I struggled a lot to try and relate to the needs of my field work church but on vicarage being there 24-7 for that year actually gave me the opportunity to experience what it's like to know the needs of a congregation and preach to those needs, whereas for Hom classes you got a general congregational setting and preached to that. That was actually a lot more difficult than real life.

Me: Excellent. Thank you guys for your time.

APPENDIX E – TRANSCRIPT OF VICARAGE SUPERVISOR PANEL DISCUSSION

Vicarage Supervisor's Conference – Concordia Seminary, St. Louis MO. September 2015

Me: Project 2 for me, trying to discover what's happening at the seminary, but the end goal of this for my purpose is to try and develop a more intentional process for my vicars in the area of homiletics and preaching.

What we are doing here today is giving me some input on what you all have done and hopefully you all can grow. We're going to have a time of discussion afterwards to let you give some feedback as well and share your experiences.

We're going to get started. Briefly, time wise, go down the row and tell me the congregation that you are serving, how many years you've been there, and how many vicars you have actually mentored.

We'll start on one end and go to the other and then as we move into the other questions it's designed to be an interaction between the four of us, so I'm not necessarily asking each one of you, we're working off of each other a little bit.

So starting at this end, real briefly, congregation, number of vicars, years you've served.

Supervisor 1: I'm at X Lutheran Church in Smalltown, Iowa. I've been there for almost 14 years. We are working on vicar #12 right now.

Supervisor 2: I'm at Y Lutheran at Smalltown, MO. It's a congregation about 190 years old, a lot of history. I've been there 6 years and I've had 4 vicars so far.

Supervisor 3: I'm at Z Lutheran Church in Smallcity, IL. I've been there 10 years which means I just started with my 11th vicar. But more pertinent, I think perhaps, is that the congregation has had 46. We've had the most in the LCMS.

Me: Excellent. Alright well let's start at the very beginning. The thought process here is as you have that new vicar assigned to you and you're looking at that very first sermon that they are going to preach. What is your process or practice of assessing where they are homiletically to get them ready for that first sermon? In other words how do you mentor them into their first preaching experience at your congregation?

Supervisor 3: The first thing, they come from the seminary, we have an idea of how many sermons they've actually delivered. So we have a little bit of an idea before they come. My experience has been what John and Glenn said. It's all over the place. Some vicars have two live sermons and others have had maybe 20. So that helps. But I think the most important thing is to not throw them into it right away. Give them several weeks. So I'll

wait until the end of the first month. The difficulty comes however, when you want to go to the ordination of the guy who was the vicar two years ago and – now we have retired pastor in the congregation which helps – but if I’ve got to be gone the second Sunday the new vicar is there – he’s often going to preach.

But in general I give him a lot of time to spend time on it because for some of them it’s a massive undertaking.

Me: How would you describe how you interact with them during that month when they’re prepping that first sermon. Are they turning stuff into you?

Supervisor 3: Yes. I use a little thing called START – sermon starters. It’s just a little pneumonic device I use for myself. This is how you get started. Pick your Scripture, Theme, the Admonition, how are you going to apply the law, yes it’s sin, but every sin has a name so what’s the name of the sin in this sermon. So that’s S, T, A and then R is reconciliation, how’s the gospel come through here and then T is finally the Thread – the train of thought, basically the outline. So, what I’ve heard from Glenn and John – if you can’t tell it to me in 3 minutes it’s going to be hard to do it in 15-20.

We go from there to the manuscript, to having them practice delivery. That’s a telling moment too, when they step into the pulpit if they’re not shaking in their boots. You can asses a little of their level of confidence then.

Me: Excellent. Supervisor 2, leading into that first preaching experience, what’s your process of mentoring them?

Supervisor 2: I’m a little unconventional. The first thing I do is hand them *Green Eggs and Ham* and take them into our grade school class and say, read this to the kids. If you can read *Green Eggs and Ham* like you’re a seminary professor or you can read it like the kids want to interact and be part of the story. I say, that’s what I want in a sermon. I’ve got a bunch of farmers in my congregation, they need to connect. Then I hand them a newspaper and say turn to the comics. You’ve got four cells of a comic. You can tell the sermon has to have four individual parts. If someone can make you laugh in four cells or give you a thought in four cells. That’s what your sermon is. Everybody in this room. You’re sermon actually breaks down into about four cells, maybe five or six on Sunday, you know on Sunday you have the color comics, get some extra cells. It’s four cells. That’s what I want your sermon in. It’s kind of like the four pages of a sermon technique, but cartoons, this is our newer generation. Millennials preach a lot different than we do whether you believe it or not. So to break it down into cartoon cells, they can understand that. And then I take them into the sanctuary and I have them preach and I do not allow them to use notes. You get a Bible. That’s it. And my, I learned that from Dale Meyer, David Schmitt, and other professors. They basically throw you to the wolves. They stand in there... I don’t let them preach until the first month is over but we go through their sermon a couple weeks... We go into the sanctuary and I say “Preach.” And in the middle I’ll tell them to sit down and I’ll show you what you need to do right here. No hands in your pockets, not pulpit. I’m the worst fear any seminarian has. You will not

preach from the pulpit. You will have a Bible in your hand and that's it. And I've had guys tell me – I had one who put himself in the hospital because he was so nervous before he came down for vicarage. And the very next one said, that will never happen. Well, let me tell you, he preaches without notes, right now. It's one of those... you have to just encourage them in a positive way, that's the key, be positive, but you have to work with them to help them understand the idea... The other thing I do is say, ok, tell me everything you know about Elijah. Well he, fought with those priests and fire came down from heaven... OK, what else... Well, that's all I know. Look, I know you trained a lot, you could read it, you learned it at the seminary, but before you preach you've got to know it backwards and forwards and you've got to be able tell the story of Elijah from the time he's sitting in that valley and the river dries up and the ravens are bringing him food all the way to the widow's house – you guys all know these stories – but the seminarians don't know everything about Elijah. That's the key. You need to learn everything about Elijah – you can do it 10 minutes on the internet. Sorry I hate to bring that up. 10 minutes on the internet you'd be surprised at how many things are cool about Elijah. Once you've got that you can get up and preach about Elijah for two hours. Now I don't allow two hours. You've got 12 minutes. I give them a 12 minute sermon, that's it. Four pages equals 12 minutes.

Me: So I hear you saying about a month in advance, they get there, you spend about a month doing these different activities with them and lead them into that first preaching experience.

Supervisor 2: Then after that first preaching experience, then they preach every other week. Not consistently but almost every other week and that gives them more experience.

Me: Supervisor 1, how do you lead them into that very first preaching experience.

Supervisor 1: It starts with the very first day I meet with them. I tell them from the beginning that when you hand in your first manuscript that I will be very critical and I will probably ask you to make drastic changes. But I'll tell them from the beginning, don't take it personally because I do this with everybody. That way when we do work with them, I do work with them on their sermon, they don't get so frustrated, thinking, oh, I did a horrible job. It's hard for me to hand over the pulpit twice a month without making sure the quality is there.

So I start there. Then we assign the next Sunday that they will preach, usually three weeks in. The Thursday the week before they hand in a one-sentence theme of what their sermon will be about. And that usually begins discussion and that's where I can tell whether they've studied the text thoroughly or not. Then when they understand the text, and then on Monday I have a manuscript and then usually toward the beginning – two or three revisions in – that Thursday they'll preach it to me and I'll give them pointers on how it goes and how to present it.

Me: Good. So from arrival to first sermon, again about how long?

Supervisor 1: About three weeks.

Me: That's the first preaching experience as they come in brand new and then as the year progresses – and I'm trying to tie together the hermeneutics and the homiletics – how much time or input do you have with them in their preparation time of trying to discover what the actual meaning or idea in the text that they're going to preach on? In other words, is it pretty much, whatever they come up with out of the text or are you guiding them in some way to discover what their theme, that theme sentence is going to be? Supervisor 2 how do you do that?

Supervisor 2: I have 12 old ladies that do that. Sounds really odd. On Wednesdays, I started a Bible study on Wednesday mornings, whoever is preaching the next Sunday leads the Bible study. What I do, is the Bible study is simply on the pericope text. So this past week whatever the pericope was, the Old Testament, the Epistle, and Gospel. The student has to go through whatever the text is and basically, underline words and almost like a sermon starter, you go through and underline words that are key in the text, like – this week, we actually switched the Old Testament and did Moses and he comes down the mountain with the 10 Commandments and smashes them because they have the golden calf – so I have to underline, why the cow, why did he smash them, what happened up on the mountain – and then you have to talk about it with 12 old ladies, with blue hair, and it's awesome, because they interact with him and he starts to understand – Dr. Nielsen said – they have to understand who the congregation is. And what better way than to have a Bible study on the exact text you're going to preach on, which helps them formulate different ideas and help them understand where they are coming from. How that actually connects to them. That's basically how I help them.

Me: So that's a week before they preach?

Supervisor 2: No that's the week of – he should already have his sermon written and handed in, but then his sermon isn't done. It's always a work in progress. It never ends until the day he gets up and preaches it.

Me: OK. Supervisor 3 how do you do that, how do you help them discover what they're going to preach on in the text? Is there a process that you follow?

Supervisor 3: Well we try and do through the year, what we do from the start, and that's think it through ahead of time and get the idea, use the sermon starter technique that I talked about. Or Goal, Malady, Means. Or Point, Promise, Problem. However you want to identify it? But if you don't have an idea of where you're going, you're going to just drive aimlessly.

Me: Do you find them arriving at strange ideas from the text that you have to redirect them to read again and think about what the author was actually trying to communicate.

Supervisor 3: I would say in general no. The seminaries are very good at teaching them exegesis. So when it comes to explication of what text means, what's happening there. There's never any problem. It's the application that they grow and mature in as they relate it to the life of the person in the pew.

Me: Supervisor 1 in the lead up in trying to discover the theme out of their text?

Supervisor 1: Well, I think a lot of that is, like I said, the one sentence thing. I can tell when they're struggling writing the sermon, part of it is they haven't fully grasped the text yet. And then when we talk that out – it's – oh, OK – I see where that's getting at. I think it's also good for the vicar to understand that sometimes when they're writing the sermon they have kind of a caricature of the law and the gospel, what they think they need to hear. And they keep the text at kind of an arm's distance away from them. So, you know, especially the first couple of months I ask the vicar, "Do you think people really think that way about this? Is that really an issue that we are dealing with?" And I ask, "Is this something you're dealing with?" And they say, "no." And I say, why are you preaching that. So I ask them to really wrestle with that themselves. What is it from the text that you really need to hear, that you struggle with? And look honestly at yourself and those close to you, the people you hear on the visits that you make, so that there is that connection, rather than just keeping a text at an arm's length. This is what it means. This is what it says, without really kind of developing what is really needed to hear from the text.

Me: Ok. Good. So we're still in the same category of preparation, getting them ready for their sermons week after week, developing in them a habit of how they prep for a sermon - the exegetical part of it and trying to discover the meaning. How much work do you do with your vicar in terms of helping them structure their sermons and giving them guidance on what particular structure they might use, or even recognizing variety of structures that might be useful to them? What's your work with them on the structure part of their sermon?

Supervisor 1: I don't really require an outline, because sometimes an outline winds up just being like bullet points that locks them in and freezes them. I'm more of a flow of thought guy. Take that one theme sentence and really setting the Law and the Gospel up on the tee. As far as structuring, I think sometimes they focus on, what is the law in this, and so, the first thing is how am I going to preach the law from the text and then how do you preach the gospel from this text? But as far as the flow, it's just a matter of are you staying consistent with the theme. Are you an encyclopedia showing how much you know? Or are you preaching the text so they can walk out of the sermon saying, the sermon was about... and being able to explain what the theme of the sermon was in a clear way. So it really focuses on staying close to your theme and eliminating information that distracts from that.

Me: Ok. Do you see them trying to experiment with varieties of structures from say an inductive kind of structure where you save the big idea for the end vs. stating it at the beginning – deductive laying out what you're preaching about or thematic

structures, or narrative structures? Do they experiment much or is there kind of a set form?

Supervisor 1: I think a lot of that – what they learn from that is – from hearing me preach. I would say as I mentioned – I’m critical of the sermons – I think it’s of the utmost importance that the supervisor works diligently on his own sermon and preach really good sermons. If you want this vicar to trust what you say about their sermon and they don’t respect the fact that you are working hard and preaching a very high quality sermon, then they’re not going to listen to you. They’ll get angry when you tell them something. They won’t respect what you’re asking them to do. So I think some of that comes with modeling, and really being diligent in your own sermon preparation. Making sure that you preach the best sermon that you can every Sunday. That’s one reason why I like being part of the vicarage program. Not that I wouldn’t do that previously, but it always keeps it you on your toes. Am I preaching this new and fresh? Am I really working hard to preach a quality sermon so that I can model that not only for the congregation, but also for the vicar so that he actually values what you have to say about his sermon?

Me: Supervisor 3, the structures, helping them in their sermon prep time, helping them think about the various structures they might use?

Supervisor 3: Well, I’ve had Ft. Wayne guys for the last nine years, so they’re tuned into Aho and the Lively Skeleton. And I’m a St. Louis graduate from the early 80’s and we used the Lively Skeleton there too. So I think the way you write it, the outline kind of develops. But even more importantly is how you deliver it – your outline comes out of that. I graduated from here in ’83 so I was a note-less guy too, but I don’t require them to go note-less, because there’s a lot of debate on that, but I talk about functional memorization. If you don’t know how your sermon flows from point A or point B – so whether you call it an outline, or flow, or whatever – I think it will show in delivery if it’s organized.

Me: Structures?

Supervisor 2: Well I do make my seminary vicars – they write every word out of their sermon. I don’t ask them to memorize their manuscript. They have to memorize the idea, the skeleton, the basics. And then on every sermon, if not once a year, then more, I write in giant red letters, So What – with a giant question mark. Because they’re really good at explaining the text and the exegesis about the whole thing, but now, I’ve got a farmer here who’s tractor broke down – so what?! So what?! If you can answer that question in the sermon then you’re connecting with the people. If you’re not answering it then they’re going to leave with their heads swimming that you just explained this Greek word six times and they still don’t know what that means about their life or their difficulties.

Me: Excellent. This is a real quick one, probably to just kind of wrap this section up. How does your mentoring of the vicar change over the course of the year with the

progress of their preaching? Or do you kind of do the same thing all year long? Does it change? Supervisor 2, do you do anything different as they progress?

Supervisor 2: Yes. As they progress I give them – I let the reins out more. At the beginning you're holding them tight, you're keeping them close, you're wanting to watch and read through everything at least a week in advance. I make them prepare far in advance of when their sermon is, so when they get done preaching they're starting the next one that's coming up in two or three weeks. As you get a little further into it and see that they are progressing, you let back a little bit and see how they work it out themselves.

Me: Supervisor 1, is that true for you too? Or is it pretty much the same all through.

Supervisor 1: Yes. About half way through I'm in their heads and they kind of know what I'm going to say, so they don't write what I don't want to hear. I've had them tell me when they graduate that they still hear my voice in their head. But really the advance that I see is that they struggle to find their own – style – they go from – this is – what I'm doing and then they just try and copy me – but I don't like that either, because I want them to have their own style – what's comfortable for them. And when I ask them to make changes – we talk about that along the way. And if they don't want to change I ask them to talk about it, because if they're preaching something they're not comfortable with it's going to show in how they preach it. But there is – it becomes a less tedious process as they – as I kind of get in their head.

Me: Did we get down the line with that one – how do they change over the course of the year? Supervisor 3?

Supervisor 3: The only thing I would add is that toward the end I make it a deliberate process – and part of that is I want to get away on vacation before the next vicar comes – but I'll make them preach two and often times three Sundays in a row so they get the idea of – you're probably not going to be in a mega-church when you get out. You're going to be a solo pastor where you do it all the time. I think of my first call and Holy Week came and I had all those services, plus a suicide my first year. So towards the end I want them to do two or three different sermons, in succession, in addition to making their good-bye rounds on calls.

Me: So I hear all of you saying, that as they progress – and I'm guessing it varies from vicar to vicar – how close you need to stay to them through the course of their vicarage year – but kind of trying to release them to be more independent and not have quite as much oversight as to where – how they're preparing for the sermon itself. So let's switch gears. Let's go to the other side. Let's talk about delivery. We've heard a little bit of how that happens already in your conversations but after delivery, what type of evaluation do you use with your vicar, after they've delivered the sermon, now what?

Supervisor 3: I don't have a structured way of doing it. It's just what hits me at the time. Most of them, if they're readers, it's going to be pretty close to the paper – the danger is if they're not used to that and they try and get away from it – they'll say something they didn't want to say. So that's a learning experience, to go from there. I mentioned before the congregation having 46 vicars and so I encourage the congregation to give feedback and most of the feedback comes on delivery, I would say, not necessarily on content. But most of it comes from people who will be the vicar's closest friend. So it's well received criticism. So for instance just a week or so ago, something happened where the vicar – and it wasn't written that way – but there was improper grammar that came out. It was the "I and me" sort of thing. He said "I" where it should have been "me" or something and we've got a couple teachers in the congregation so the whole sermon is lost because he used some bad grammar. Well this lady is the vicar's best friend and so she can be snarky and they'll take it. And he happened to refer to a Greek word in the sermon and she comes up to him afterwards – and he took it well because she had an established relationship already after a week. And she said, don't tell me about Greek if you can't speak English yet! It sounded worse than it really was. At first she came to me and said, didn't you proof read that – didn't you catch that. It was all done in love, it really was and he took it well. And believe me I don't think he'll get I and me mixed up anytime soon. The congregation probably gives more feedback on delivery than I do.

Me: So, fairly informal on your part. Meeting with him afterwards?

Supervisor 3: It's a process and they grow into that.

Me: Supervisor 2, what do you do post delivery to evaluate what they've done.

Supervisor 2: Post delivery I use a baseball analogy. It's simple, everybody can understand it because – the millennials – you've got to be simple. When they walk in my office after they're done preaching after the two services. They walk in my office, we do a debrief every Sunday. Sit in the office, because we're always waiting on the wives – to do whatever they're doing – you know that – and we're in the office and they say – Well? – and I say that – you got a base hit – or you bunted and you barely got on first – or you got a double, or triple, or today you hit a home run. That was the bomb. And the day they can knock it out of the park those are the days you give them those accolades. So if you got a base hit – you gave us some law – you gave us some gospel – now it wasn't over the top – because I want them to learn to play with people's souls – not in a fun way – but like – you – I get them from the seminary, to be honest I've only had four - but they say, well, I preach over the heads. I'm like no, no, no, no... You're here, you're not reading, you're going to be staring them in the eye and you're going to take their soul out of their body and you're going to make their heart beat to what you're talking about, because I'm doing that to you right now. And once you've got that, you've figured that out, that technique... And so that's what I do – when they preach their first sermon, I go sit in the congregation – I'm not sitting on the high throne in the back because I can't see them. So I go sit with my wife in the congregation and I watch them and I watch the congregation as they are responding. And so I also ask them, who were the sleepers this week? And they'll be like, huh? Find the guy sleeping and you better grab his soul and wake him up.

And then that helps their delivery to connect more than anything, if they're actually speaking to the individuals and not over their heads.

Me: Supervisor 1, delivery, post sermon, how do you help them evaluate?

Supervisor 1: Unless there's something really specific, something in a sermon that needs to be addressed, that I heard in delivery, that I really need to address because it's a prime example, I'm real careful on post sermon – you did this wrong or this wrong or this wrong. I generally store it away for the next time and I say when you preach try working on these things. I get nervous about – when the sermon is done, it's done. I don't want him saying, oh, I messed that up or I preached this wrong. I don't want him second-guessing. I want him confident in the pulpit and I don't want him to be second-guessing himself over a sermon he just preached. So I do – unless it's a glaring thing that really needs to be discussed, then I'll discuss it – but if it's not – I'll store it away till the next sermon and then I'll say, when you preach this, do this... use your pacing a little differently, take a breath, give them time to think about this point. And as I'm going through the sermon with them, I'll use previous information for the next sermon, so I'm not pounding on them, because they did the Lord's work, they preached the word, the Holy Spirit did his job and I don't want to overly talk about the previous sermon, but I use the information to talk about the next one.

Supervisor 3: I wanted to add one thing I thought of. We do record the sermons so every vicar gets a copy of every sermon, usually to send to mom or grandma, but I say sometime, several times through the year, listen to yourself. I hate to do it myself.

Me: I was going to ask that question next in fact because we video and do live broadcast of our services over the Internet so that's one of the things that I will ask them to do. Now, I haven't asked them to do it with me, but that maybe coming, to say, let's sit and just watch this together. My wife is a schoolteacher of 35 years, she's had student teachers and so forth and I picked that up from her. More the idea at the end of that asking them, what did you feel like you did really well in this sermon? Getting them to give me—where they think they were connecting—and which part if you could do it over again would you maybe change a little bit, or where to you see yourself having struggles? And as I have done that it has really opened up the ability for them to do more self assessment and for me then to be able to give them direction and guidance in some of those pieces.

Supervisor 1: I do model that self-assessment for them. I might say, of my sermon, afterwards, when we're getting our robes off, that sermon that I preached I didn't know if that came across in the same way I expected it to. Or I do a little bit of that to show that I myself am still growing in that. So that when he goes through it, it's ok, that's why you're here to have that comfortableness to have him talk about it as well. Show a little vulnerability on my part.

Me: Supervisor 2, I think we know kind of where your at in terms of delivery and I want to hear some more of that. But what's the end goal for you guys, in terms of

their delivery? What are you hoping for them to be able to do by the time they get down with vicarage?

Supervisor 3: This is an insight I learned from the congregation, again, and they commented about one particular vicar. And these are the committed people, the ones that love the vicar, even if they can be snarky. But I think the best comment I heard is, he's the same guy in the pulpit as he was when he visited me at the house. It's a sort of genuineness there. I think if you can be the man of God you are in the pulpit as you are when you are one on one. That's the goal.

Me: Supervisor 2, what do you think? Your goal at the end, what's the goal that you have for your vicar in terms of their delivery?

Supervisor 2: Well I like that thought – I want them to understand that they are just as big a sinner – “chief of sinners though I be...” you all know the hymn. I tell them to think about that and when you're preaching, you're up there sinning too. It's not about you and they're a bunch of sinners but you and I, you and me, whichever you want to say, correctly. I don't worry about that – but help them understand that you are human too, and you go through struggles also, and you're right there with them and here's where Jesus is with all of us. And that's the point, that they connect with the individuals where they're at in relationship to where Jesus is and what he did.

Supervisor 1: My goal is I want them to be good preachers. I know that sounds kind of basic, but you know, we're helping them try and develop their own style, but it's always a work in progress, for me, for everyone. So, stick with the process, continue to try and get better. I tell them when they hand me a sermon the first time or second time. This is a good sermon. This is adequate in a lot of places. But we're going to work on making it better. It's the constant striving, the working, to not think that he's reached a certain level. To be confident in what he's doing, but always, constantly looking to be better along the way.

Me: This is a different direction from the sermon prep and delivery, to think a little bit about where you see the vicars, or how do you interact with them, to discover where they are personally in their faith life, to discover where they are on their walk, if you will, how they're relating their faith to their life? Do you have those kinds of conversations with your vicar?

Supervisor 1: Yes. A lot of times that comes in the sermon writing, when I mention, I ask, is that really something you struggle with. Is this really how you think about things, that you think everyone else is? And they'll say no. And over time I see a change in that, but ... like you said, the genuineness.

Me: Their spiritual walk? You guys, what do you see? How do you mentor them in terms of where they are, Supervisor 2, as you deal with that vicar?

Supervisor 2: I've only had four vicars, so I'm not as experienced, but all four are so different. The first two were really young. They went through four years of college and went to the seminary. The last two, one served a term in Iraq and the other served a term in Afghanistan. So their life experiences, all four, as you would call, a snot nosed kid who goes through the system and he comes to be a preacher, he doesn't know anything about reality, what real life is about, because mommy and daddy paid for everything versus the guy who went to Iraq and saw some horrific things and then decided to go into the ministry on top of that. Those conversations, you get them on the boat, you put a fishing pole in your hand, hopefully you don't catch any fish and then they talk. That's what I do with mine. I get relationship whether it's during the week, through their sermons, or after their work hours are done. It gives us a moment away and we can actually talk about their life.

Me: Supervisor 3, what do you do to try and figure out where they are at?

Supervisor 3: I'm old enough now that most of the young guys I'm as old as their dads. You're not their buddy necessarily, but you're a mentor and you see them through and you want the best for them. I think the best thing to do, my wife and I pray for the vicar every day. If you do that...

Supervisor 1: I've noticed too in some of the vicars that you can tell that in some of them there has been a lack of male leadership, a role model in their life, and just general things you wind up helping them with.

Supervisor 3: I was going to say, I've had three or four that were pastor's sons and I always kind of look at them with trepidation because they may come knowing it all already, but in general, I've had a good experience with those who have been pastor's sons. They've really been open to – this may not be the way dad did it – but thanks for telling me.

Supervisor 3: I tell the vicars, the first week together, my goal for you for this whole year, not just preaching, but everything, to really want to be a pastor more at the end than at the start. So to increase the desire and the eagerness to serve in the holy office so you try not to let the discouragements or the bad experiences cloud – try and keep them idealistic and eager.

Supervisor 1: Yes. I have the same thing. I tell them I'm going to try and make their fourth year as miserable as possible.

Me: We're going to wrap up now with these last experiential questions. Think of a time or give me an example, give me a story about one of the most satisfying experiences you've had with a vicar in terms of their preaching. What was it you saw? Tell us a story about that. What do you think?

Supervisor 1: I can think of a time a few years ago when my wife had just gone through surgery and it was kind of scary time for me because it was a cancer surgery. She's fine

now and everything worked out fine, but for me to rely on what the vicar was preaching, not just evaluating how he was doing things, but the fact that what the vicar had preached really connected to me and helped me with that.

Me: Supervisor 2, what do you think? A story of something really satisfying that you've seen in their preaching.

Supervisor 2: This past year our vicar, Vicar A, served in Iraq, Marine Corp, and I was in Wisconsin with some other preachers and the one guy's wife went into labor and my wife decided we wanted to stay – not that I was helping with the delivery or anything - but then I got a call from another pastor who said that his mother died and a member of his congregation died and he needed a sub to preach the sermon of the funeral. You understand the insanity. I'm in Wisconsin, can't help, but I've got a vicar. I sent him down. He preached. He got the information from the funeral home and went and preached the funeral, which is a normal thing, but it's not like he was officially marrying anyone. And it was for a retired Marine Corp veteran who died, served in WWII sort of thing. So for him that was an awesome moment to preach to something he truly understood. What it meant to serve in combat in the Marine Corp and he preached that funeral sermon. And then from that sister congregation, members to call me and say, that was so moving, your vicar came and did that funeral. And then he did the graveside and it was amazing. And you know how that made me feel? I was like the proudest daddy ever. Like my son won the spelling bee or something! It was awesome. And he was so excited and that from that moment on the scariness of the ministry, and for him to go down and do this on a whim, and you have to trust him a lot – and it all worked out perfectly, but to trust him enough to let him go and he did a great job. And I was so proud of him. And that's that homerun moment. It's like, that's my boy!

Me: Did you think of one?

Supervisor 3: Well, in general I agree with that principle if you're going to be a vicarage supervisor you've got to be a team player. This isn't a competition to see who gets the most accolades after a sermon, the pastor or the vicar. So when you look at your role and having a part of this formation that's gratifying. I'm about ready to leave for Asia for a month and the vicar is going to be alone and this has happened before. The best thing I like to hear when I get back is not, oh we missed you – that's nice too, we all like our ego stroked – but it's good to hear, the vicar did a good job.

Me: Well, I probably should have done these in the opposite order, but the backup question to that is can you tell a time that you really felt frustrated with a vicar and their preaching, where it just didn't seem – they didn't get it? It didn't click as you tried to mentor them. That one comes to mind quicker, Supervisor 3?

Supervisor 3: It does, but it's not necessarily preaching. I only really had one vicar with issues. If you have to call back to the seminary and this was before John was there, you've got an issue. I've only had to do that one time. And it was really a work ethic. It did show in his sermon, but it shows in your pastoral care too. We all know as pastor that

your moments in the pulpit are really formed by your moments in the living room or at the hospital bed, or something like that. It's the habitus that you develop as a pastor, if you don't have it six days a week, you're not going to have it for the hour on Sunday morning.

Me: A frustrating experience, Supervisor 1, with their preaching?

Supervisor 1: Usually if there's frustration it's on his part, not on my part because unless I'm comfortable with the sermon, he's not preaching it. So, as far as that goes there might be some frustration that he's not understanding a point I'm giving him. But generally they value my opinion. They want to create the best sermon they can. That's why they listen to me.

Me: Have you had to change it up at the last minute and say, you're not preaching this week?

Supervisor 1: No, because I give them plenty of time. It's due on Monday. Up until that point it might take several revision. Like I said it's hard for me to just give over the pulpit unless I know it's going to be a quality sermon. So I insure that that happens.

Me: Good. Supervisor 2, frustrating experience in trying to mentor them in preaching?

Supervisor 2: It's usually with the free flowing concept that you write your sermon out word for word and you get up and preach without notes. It's when they use improper words. That's the most terrifying thing. I had a vicar use a bad word. And most of us wouldn't think of it as a bad word. They used the word "stupid." And you see a lot of mother's eyes go up. And he was referring to himself. I felt so stupid. And all these mothers came into my office right afterwards, you know those moments, where they're like, that is not a proper word to be using in God's house ... we live in the 1950's in Smalltown, MO, I don't know where you guys live. Smalltown, we're still in the 1950's so that's an improper word. I shouldn't have even said it here. I should have referred to it as the "s" word but you would have thought it was something else. So it's those ... giving them enough freedom to express themselves but then talk to them afterwards. In that instance, I called him into the office and I said, that's not a proper word in this community. And they're like, really? Yes. There's other words – you'd think that's not bad at all, but that is, trust me. And I usually tell the members, he's a vicar, he's learning, and we'll correct it.

Me: So I asked this question before, and then realized I was actually getting into this. How familiar are you, or how aware do you think you are of the actual curriculum, now not just, Hom1 and Hom2, but the books that are being used, the texts that are being used to form them in Hom1 and Hom2? How familiar are you with what's going on here or at Ft. Wayne in terms of the Hom1, Hom2 process?

Supervisor 2: I graduated in '09, 2009. I just look a lot older than I really am. So I got out of here in '09. The books they use here are great. They teach you the structure. They teach you the structure really well. So I had Four Pages of the Sermon, and I don't remember all the books, but that's the primary one that sticks with me because I had Schmitt and Mayer and Smith. The books were great. I think it comes down to the application to the congregation is the biggest thing. They understand how to build a sermon beautifully. They probably do it better than I do, but it comes down to then, the delivery is the key. If you can deliver it well... so I think the books are good.

Me: So again, understanding of what the academic background is that they are coming to you with?

Supervisor 1: I've been getting Ft. Wayne guys. We'll talk about Aho and those type of things. Goal, Malady, and Means. It doesn't seem like the curriculum is too different outside of ... the curriculum is completely different actually ... but the actual preaching curriculum is the same.

Me: Supervisor 3?

Supervisor 3: I'm old enough that I do have Caemmerer's book so I always show them that.

Me: I would say, that's been part of my struggle, too, is not being as aware as to what the curriculum is and being more conversant with it so that I'm interacting with them more on the bases of what they were supposed to learn. I think it was said, Year 1 is sort of like boot camp. I'm wondering , how much have they picked up of that really good stuff that's been delivered to them, helping them discover that and then actually start to put it into use has been an area of growth for me to try and become a better supervisor in the preaching task.

Supervisor 2: I was just going to add, one thing I give to my vicars when they walk in the doors is Dale Carnegie's Guide to Public Speaking. It was written around the year 1900. But it's a fabulous book as far as getting up ... and presentation. It's not the sermon structure, but it's about the presentation and that seems to help them with that kind of training.

Me: Here's two last questions. These are fun ones – just out of curiosity. Do you regularly listen to sermons by other preachers? And if you do, who's your favorite and where do you like to go?

Supervisor 3: Well, I was here in the Rossow, Pikorny, Schmelder transition between Bohlman and Barth years. I always look at Karl Barth as my model preacher. I actually ask that question to the vicars, who's somebody you'll model after. Barth or Schmelder I think for instance...

Me: Some of them have recorded message out there...

Supervisor 3: No, I do listen every once in awhile listen to sermon evaluations on Issues, Etc. That's a shortcoming, I don't listen to a lot of other sermons. I do read... After 30 years in the ministry I decided I needed a little change. I've been through the 3-year lectionary ten times so we went to the 1-year. I'm not on any cause or anything to go to the 1-year lectionary. It was just different. I'm reading Walther and Luther now and I find that refreshing. I advise the vicar of that too. I probably read, not probably, I do read more sermons that I listen to other sermons.

Me: Supervisor 2, do you listen to anybody?

Supervisor 2: Yes. I'm embarrassed to tell anyone though. I like to listen to black Southern Baptist preachers. I'll listen to TJ Jakes. I can't stand his theology but I like his presentation. He can grab you and get your attention. I watch him for the whole presentation and the way he speaks with poetry. Theology, he's not all there. I've got a Lutheran filter. I can filter that out. But it helps me understand how I can be better. I'm under the continual process of working on myself, along with the vicars and that's the joy of this, work on yourself and them. I like to step out of my own self and look at what I've done and what they do, as a third party and ask where can I improve. Where was I weak? Where was I strong? And I want them to be able to do that with me. I know that's dangerous, to say, vicar, look at what I'm doing and say, in this area I could have improved. Again, these millennials see things in a different world than we do. They see everything in a two-minute segment.

Supervisor 1: I read more, but as far as the preaching, the how or whatever. Whenever I'm listening to something on talk radio or TV I listen to how people communicate and I pay attention to how people say things that connect to people and I take note of those things.

Here's the last one, what did you experience on vicarage with your vicarage supervisor with regard to preaching? Go first, Supervisor 1.

Supervisor 1: I would hand in my manuscript and then get spelling and grammar fixes.

Me: Supervisor 2?

Supervisor 2: I have to go last.

Supervisor 3: I have a vivid memory of this, but I want to preface it by saying I had a great vicarage supervisor. I wouldn't do anything different. We had a ... my wife and I lived in a Bethesda group home. We were married six months and then we had eight special needs kids – that was when Bethesda was de-institutionalizing. It was a “town-gown” campus ministry. I looked to my pastor, still living – retired of course. He was a great pastor. I model him in many ways, but like Supervisor 1 over here I kind of got spelling errors. What was really disturbing about it is my wife and I would read his sermons after every Sunday, from the Concordia Pulpit. What I'm saying is, preaching

was definitely not his strength, not by any means, but he was a wonderful pastor and a good role model, nonetheless. But I was one of these guys who had a fieldwork church an hour away from here and in St. Charles county. There were two of us guys – they had no pastor all the time I was a fieldworker – was a vacancy, so between us two fieldworkers we preached two Sundays a month and then they got a prof out once Sunday a month to do communion. So we got a lot of preaching experience in field ed. Got a lot of preaching experience on vicarage, but really not a lot of guidance. I'm happy that you developed this emphasis this year because I think that's a big part of vicarage is getting guidance and experience in preaching.

Me: Alright, Supervisor 2, tell us the story. What was your vicarage experience?

Supervisor 2: I had the worst vicarage experience of anybody! None have been worse, would you say... Pretty close. My vicarage supervisor was horrible. He left the ministry in the middle of my term as a vicar. The first six months he accused me of stealing all my sermons off the internet. Well, I preached just like I do right now, I just talk. And he thought they were all stolen. He had never heard a seminarian who could preach like "that." So you must have stolen them from someone on the internet and that was repetitive every week. He would call me into the office and chew me out and tell me which website I got it off. And I was like, no, there's no website – you know me – there's no website where this comes off! It just flows out and so that was the horrible part of vicarage. I didn't have a father confessor. I didn't have anyone to go to. So, thankfully he (Nielsen) allowed me to be vicarage supervisor and the only thing I can go back to is my training – I used to work for Delta Airlines. I had some great supervisors there. Their thoughts and how to treat their people translates directly to ministry. If you treat your employees like you treat yourself – if it was your own kid working for you – you give them compassion, you help them, you care for them. So my vicarage was horrible but I learned what not to do, so I'm doing exactly the opposite of my vicarage.

Me: I'll add, mine was basically hand in a manuscript and get it back with virtually no input. Handed back, this is ok. And then go and preach it.

Supervisor 1: Yes. Passed the theology check.

Me: Thank you all for participating.

Vicarage Supervisor Survey

Form description



1. Which seminary did you attend?

- ☐ Concordia Theological Seminary, Ft. Wayne
- ☐ Concordia Seminary, St. Louis
- ☐ Other...

2. What year did you graduate?

Short answer text

3. How many years have you supervised a vicar?

Short answer text

4. I am familiar with the preaching textbooks, articles, and video resources used in the Homiletics curriculum at the seminary my vicar is from.

	1	2	3	4	5	
Not at all	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Very familiar

5. I am familiar with the sermon preparation process being taught in at the seminary my vicar is from.

	1	2	3	4	5	
Not at all	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Very familiar

6. Initially (i.e. 1-3 months) I ask my vicar to submit his exegetical work to me prior to writing his sermon.

	1	2	3	4	5	
Never	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Always

7. Initially (i.e. 1 to 3 months) I ask my vicar to submit an outline of his sermon.

	1	2	3	4	5	
Never	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Always

8. For a set period of time (i.e first six months) I review a completed manuscript of the vicar's sermon before he preaches it.

	1	2	3	4	5	
Never	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Always

9. Throughout the year I review a completed manuscript of the vicar's sermon before he preaches it.

	1	2	3	4	5	
Never	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Always

10. I usually engage the vicar in some audience analysis as part of his sermon preparation (i.e. help him think about specific age groups, socio-economic status, or life circumstances in the congregation).

	1	2	3	4	5	
Never	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Always

11. I discuss the demographic make-up of the local community with the vicar.

	1	2	3	4	5	
Never	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Always

12. I familiarize the vicar with the history of the congregation.

	1	2	3	4	5	
Never	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Always

13. I have a conversation with the vicar to review the sermon after he has preached it.

	1	2	3	4	5	
Never	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Always

14. I use a written evaluation form to provide feedback to the vicar about his sermon after he has preached it.

	1	2	3	4	5	
Never	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Always

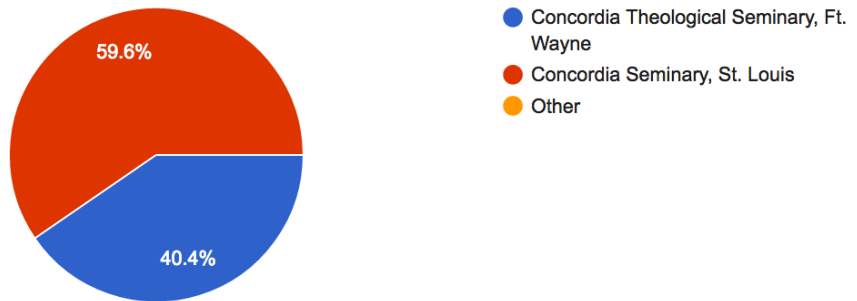
15. I have a select group of members complete a written evaluation form to provide feedback to the vicar about his sermon after he has preach it.

	1	2	3	4	5	
Never	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Always

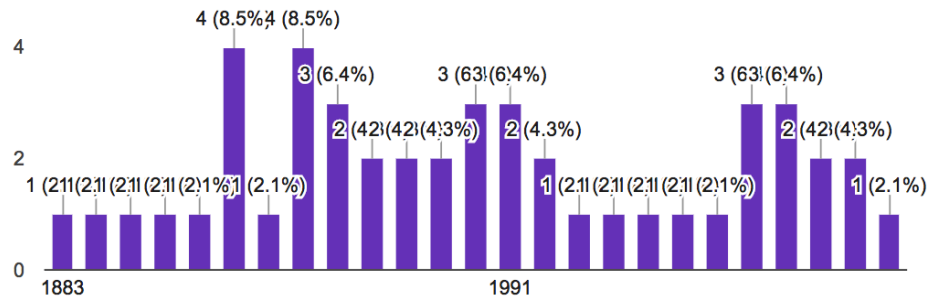
APPENDIX G – VICARAGE SUPERVISOR SURVEY RESULTS

Appendix – Vicarage Supervisor Survey Results

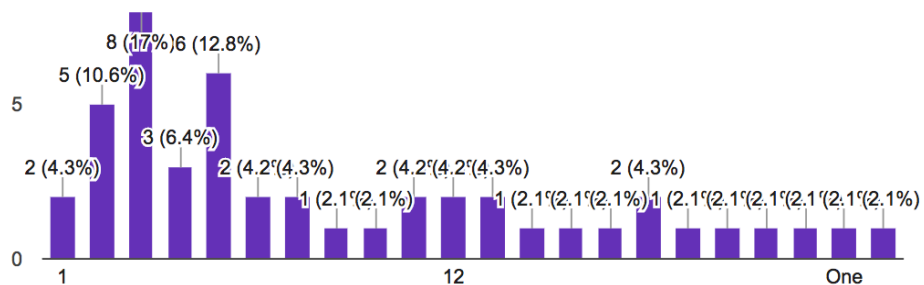
1. Which seminary did you attend? (47 responses)



2. What year did you graduate? (47 responses)

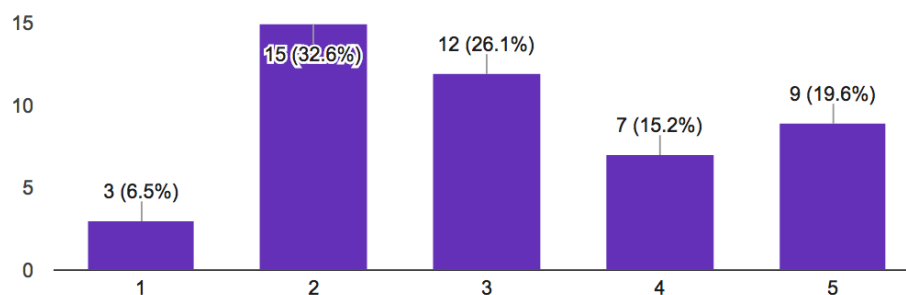


3. How many years have you supervised a vicar? (47 responses)



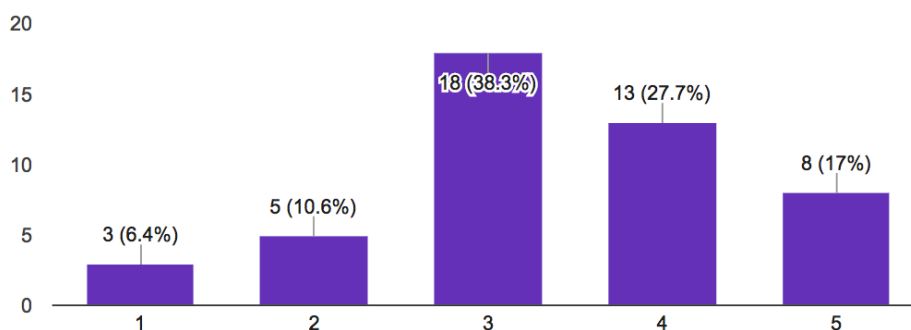
4. I am familiar with the preaching textbooks, articles, and video resources used in the Homiletics curriculum at the seminary my vicar is from.

(46 responses)



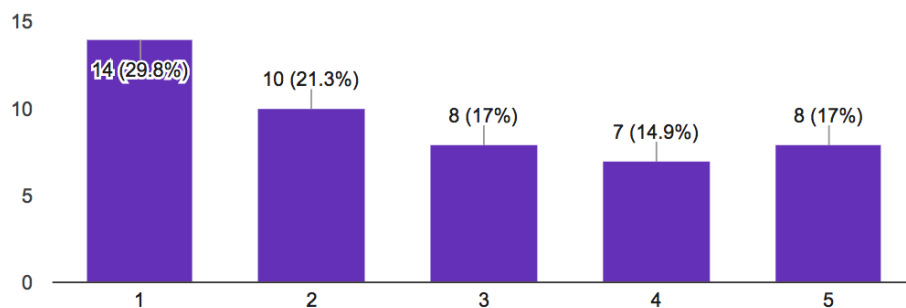
5. I am familiar with the sermon preparation process being taught in at the seminary my vicar is from.

(47 responses)



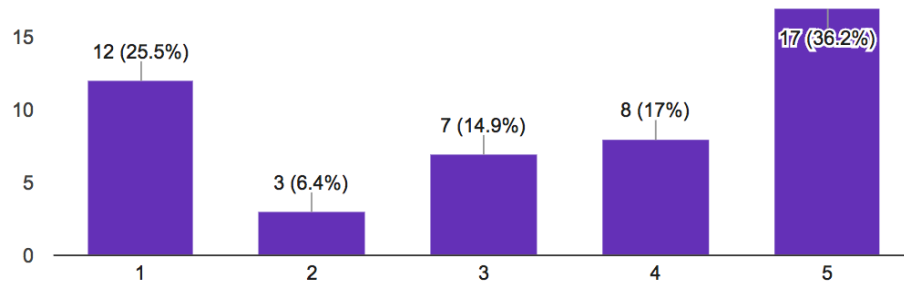
6. Initially (i.e. 1-3 months) I ask my vicar to submit his exegetical work to me prior to writing his sermon.

(47 responses)



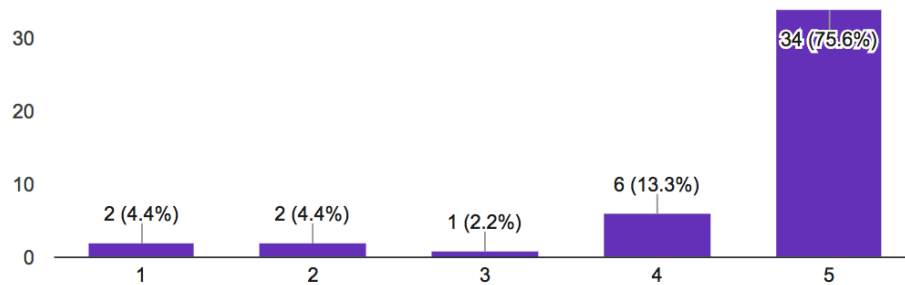
7. Initially (i.e. 1 to 3 months) I ask my vicar to submit an outline of his sermon.

(47 responses)



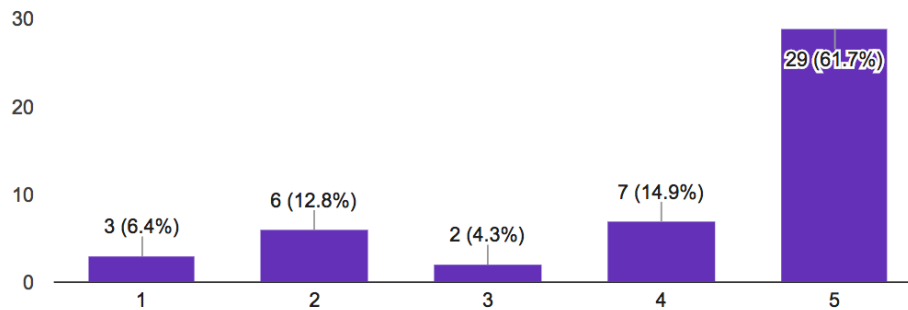
8. For a set period of time (i.e first six months) I review a completed manuscript of the vicar's sermon before he preaches it.

(45 responses)



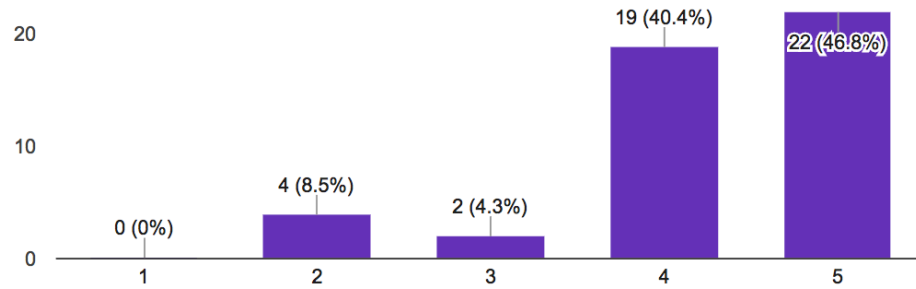
9. Throughout the year I review a completed manuscript of the vicar's sermon before he preaches it.

(47 responses)



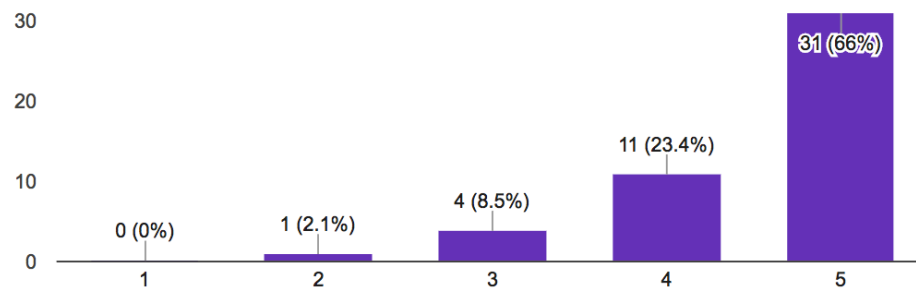
10. I usually engage the vicar in some audience analysis as part of his sermon preparation (i.e. help him think about specific age groups, socio-economic status, or life circumstances in the congregation).

(47 responses)

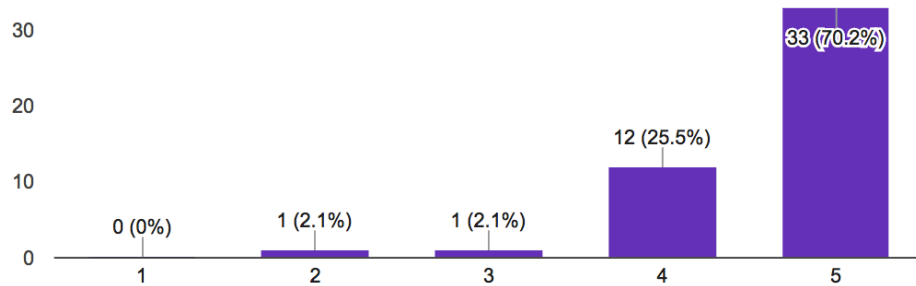


11. I discuss the demographic make-up of the local community with the vicar.

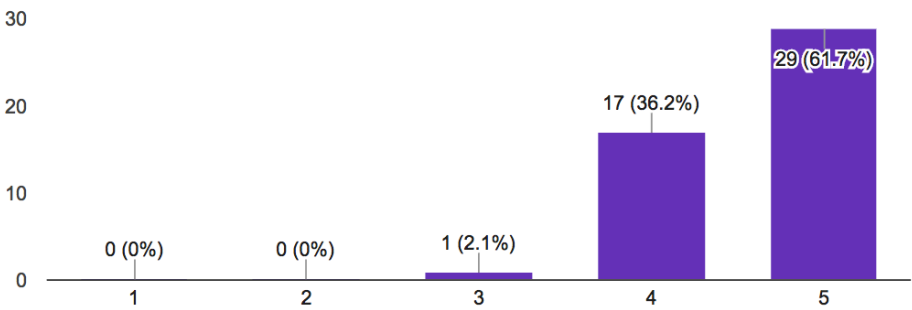
(47 responses)



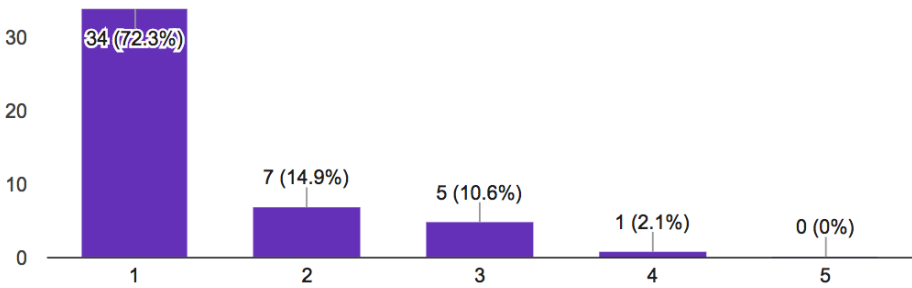
12. I familiarize the vicar with the history of the congregation. (47 responses)



13. I have a conversation with the vicar to review the sermon after he has preached it.
(47 responses)

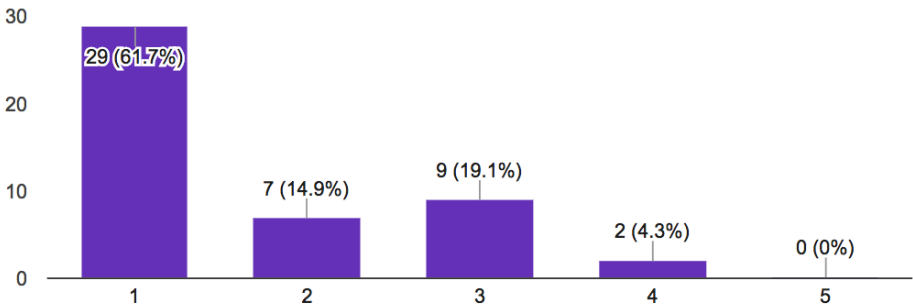


14. I use a written evaluation form to provide feedback to the vicar about his sermon after he has preached it.
(47 responses)



15. I have a select group of members complete a written evaluation form to provide feedback to the vicar about his sermon after he has preach it.

(47 responses)



APPENDIX H – SAMPLE VERBATIM FORM

Date:

Type of Visit:

Name of Person Visited:

What did you know about the person prior to the visit?

What were your first impressions when you began the visit? (Appearance, posture, facial expressions, attitude, etc.)

Pastoral Interaction (Record the basic order of the conversation. Include what Scripture you shared and your prayer with the patient.)

For example:

Vicar: Good morning Mrs. Jones. I just heard you were in the hospital. Can I come in?

Mrs. J: O, thank you so much vicar. Please do. I appreciate your coming so quickly.

Vicar: The church office said you had been admitted. Can you tell what's happening?

Mrs. J: It's my heart again. It's not staying in rhythm. The doctors said I might have to have a pacemaker.

Conclusion

What was the person's primary spiritual need?

Identify some specific sermon illustrations or applications that you might draw from this visit.

APPENDIX I – VICAR SERMON EVALUATION FORM

1. How much interaction did you have with the vicar in the week before this sermon sermon?

- ☐ None
- ☐ Greeting. "Hi, how are you...nice to see you, etc?"
- ☐ Short conversation. 1-2 minutes.
- ☐ Longer conversation. 3-10 minutes.
- ☐ Extended conversation. More than 10 minutes

2. Based on your interaction this week how friendly was the vicar toward you?

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
Not applicable	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Very

...

3. Based on your interaction this week how respectful was the vicar toward you?

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
Not applicable	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Very

4. Based on your interact this week how open and inviting was the vicar's demeanor toward you?

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
Not applicable	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Very

Part 2: Experience with the Vicar During His Sermon

Description (optional)

1. The vicar's sermon answered questions I had about the meaning of the text.

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
Not applicable	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Very

2. The vicar's sermon dealt with struggles I have to understand God and how he works in the world.

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
Not applicable	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Very

3. The vicar used illustration that I could relate to in my own personal experiences in life.

	1	2	3	4	5	
Strongly Disagree	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Strongly Agree

4. The vicar gave examples from real life that helped me see how the text applies to me.

	1	2	3	4	5	
Strongly Disagree	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Strongly Agree

5. The vicar made connections with current events and culture in a way that made me feel like he understands the world I live in.

	1	2	3	4	5	
Strongly Disagree	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Strongly Agree

6. The application of the sermon was something I can specifically use in the circumstances of my life.

	1	2	3	4	5	
Strongly Disagree	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Strongly Agree

...

7. The vicar showed me how the text might work in my life by showing me how it works in his life.

	1	2	3	4	5	
Strongly Disagree	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Strongly Agree

8. At some point in the sermon I felt like the vicar "must have been watching me this past week" because he spoke so clearly to my experience.

	1	2	3	4	5	
Strongly Disagree	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Strongly Agree

...

9. The vicar seemed genuinely interested in me as a person.

	1	2	3	4	5	
Strongly Disagree	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Strongly Agree

10. The vicar looked at the congregation and seemed interested in their response to what he was saying.

	1	2	3	4	5	
Strongly Disagree	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Strongly Agree

...

11. At the end of the sermon I felt like the vicar was talking directly to me and my circumstances.

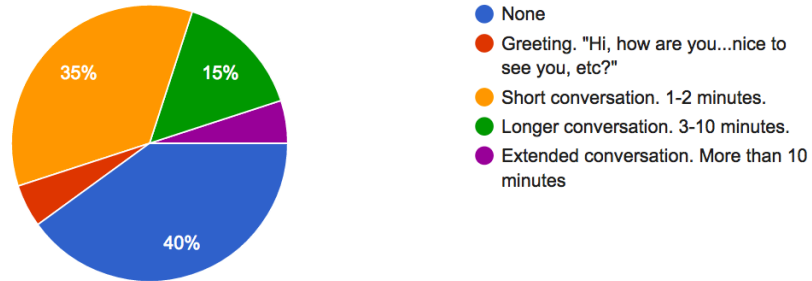
	1	2	3	4	5	
Strongly Disagree	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Strongly Agree

APPENDIX J – VICAR SERMON EVALUATION 1 RESULTS

Part 1: Experience with the Vicar Before He Preached His Sermon

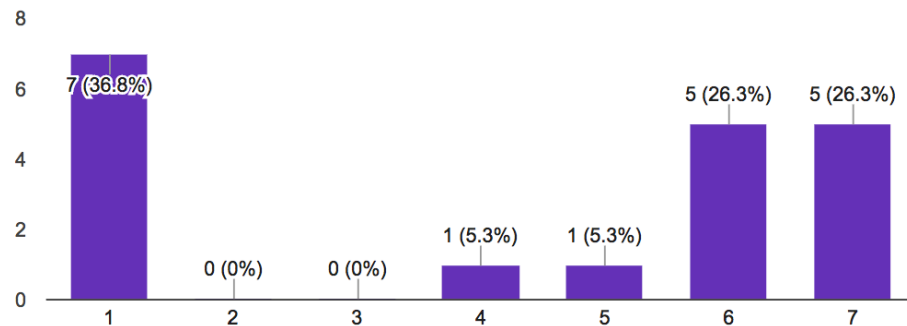
1. How much interaction did you have with the vicar in the week before this sermon?

(20 responses)



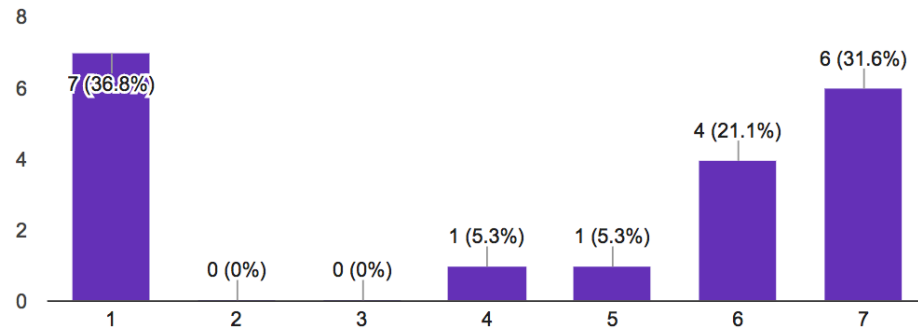
2. Based on your interaction this week how friendly was the vicar toward you?

(19 responses)



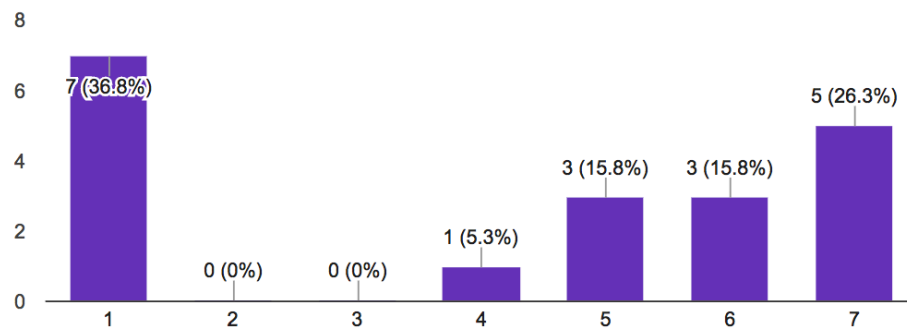
3. Based on your interaction this week how respectful was the vicar toward you?

(19 responses)



4. Based on your interact this week how open and inviting was the vicar's demeanor toward you?

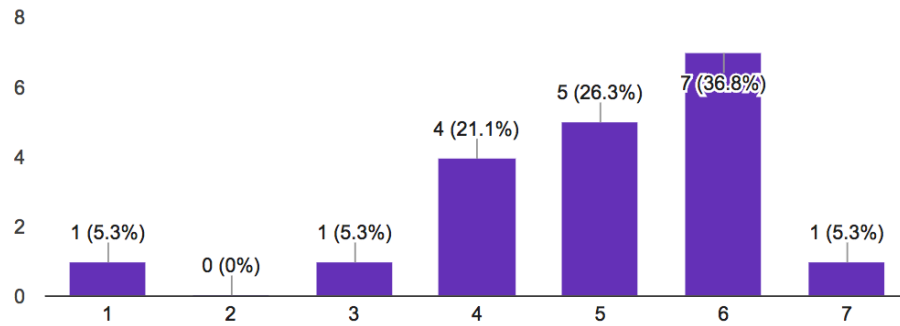
(19 responses)



Part 2: Experience with the Vicar During His Sermon

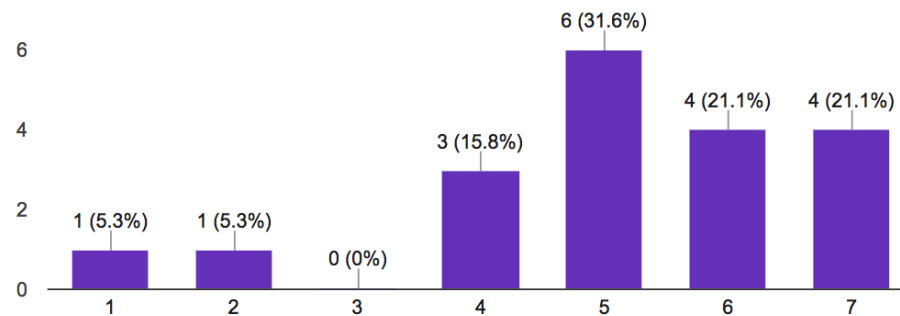
1. The vicar's sermon answered questions I had about the meaning of the text.

(19 responses)



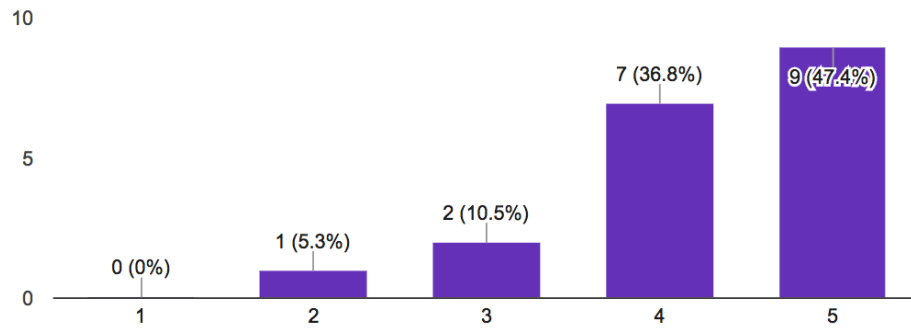
2. The vicar's sermon dealt with struggles I have to understand God and how he works in the world.

(19 responses)



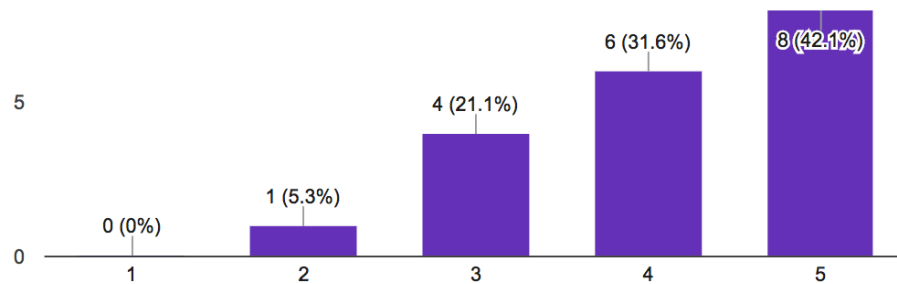
3. The vicar used illustration that I could relate to in my own personal experiences in life.

(19 responses)



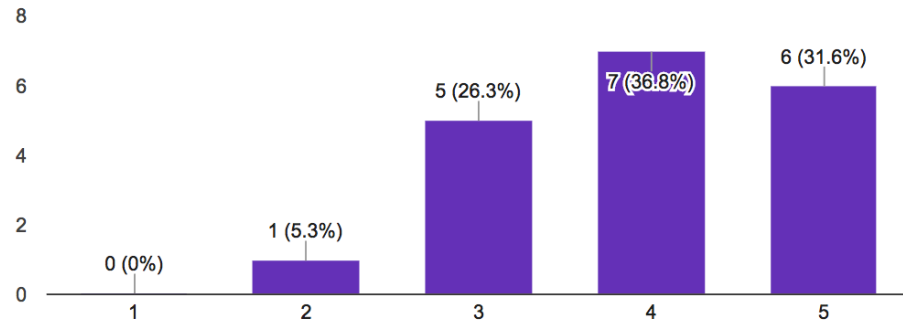
4. The vicar gave examples from real life that helped me see how the text applies to me.

(19 responses)



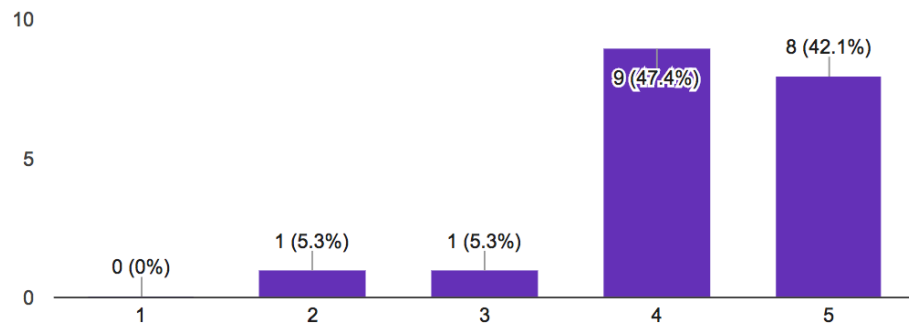
5. The vicar made connections with current events and culture in a way that made me feel like he understands the world I live in.

(19 responses)



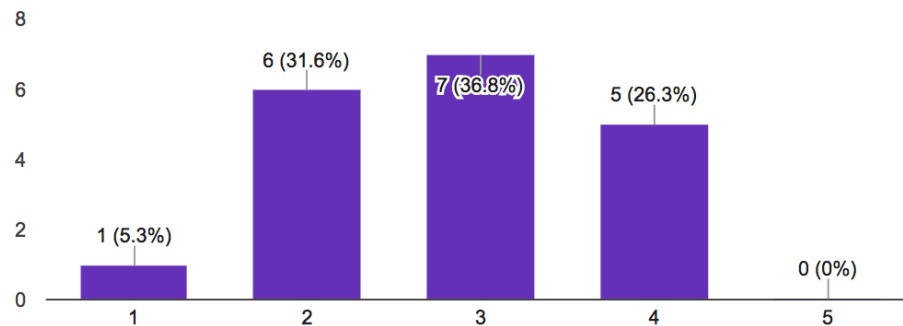
6. The application of the sermon was something I can specifically use in the circumstances of my life.

(19 responses)



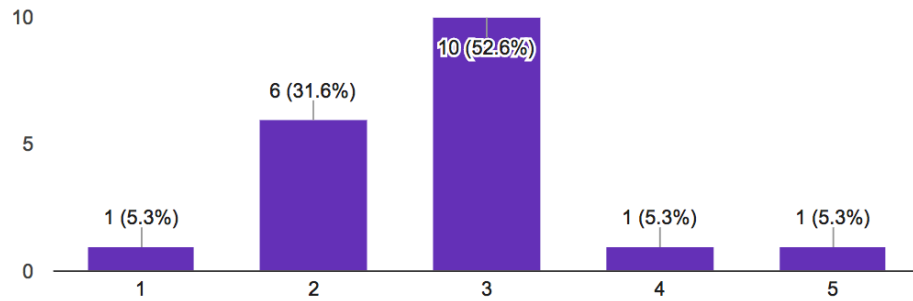
7. The vicar showed me how the text might work in my life by showing me how it works in his life.

(19 responses)

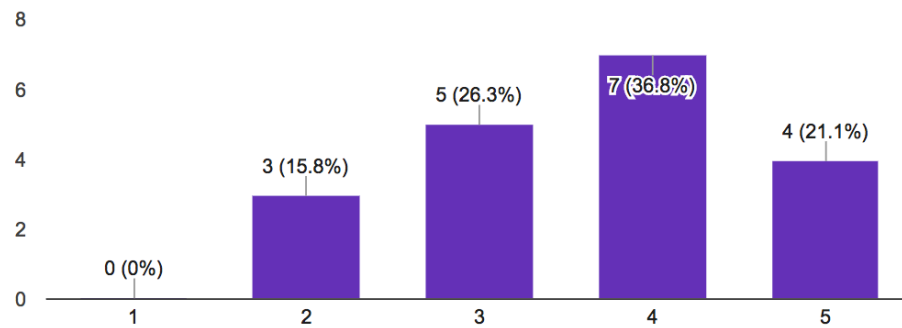


8. At some point in the sermon I felt like the vicar "must have been watching me this past week" because he spoke so clearly to my experience.

(19 responses)

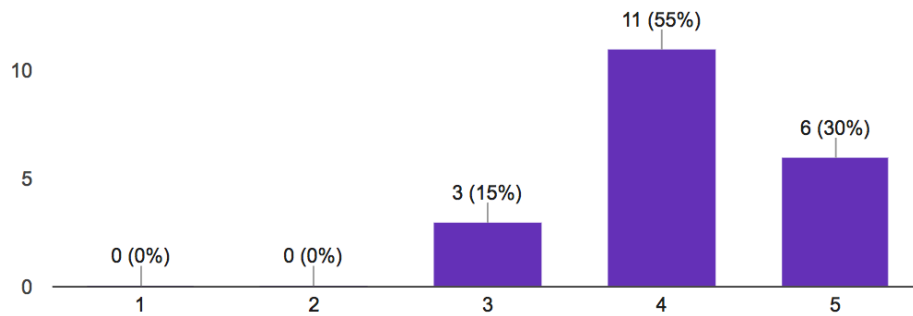


9. The vicar seemed genuinely interested in me as a person. (19 responses)



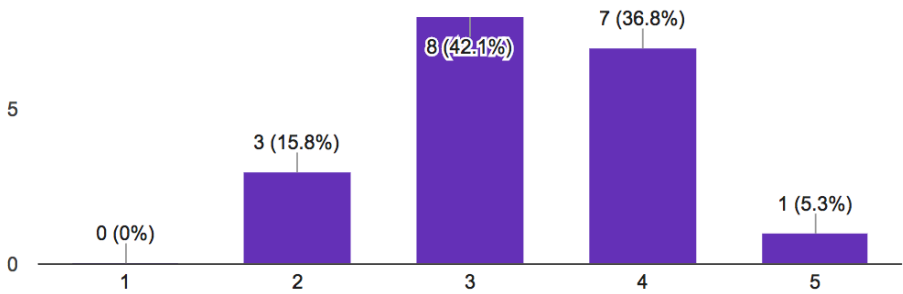
10. The vicar looked at the congregation and seemed interested in their response to what he was saying.

(20 responses)



11. At the end of the sermon I felt like the vicar was talking directly to me and my circumstances.

(19 responses)

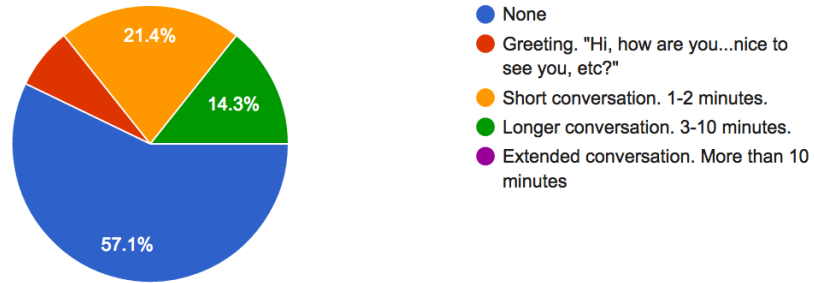


APPENDIX K – VICAR SERMON EVALUATION 2 RESULTS

Part 1: Experience with the Vicar Before He Preached His Sermon

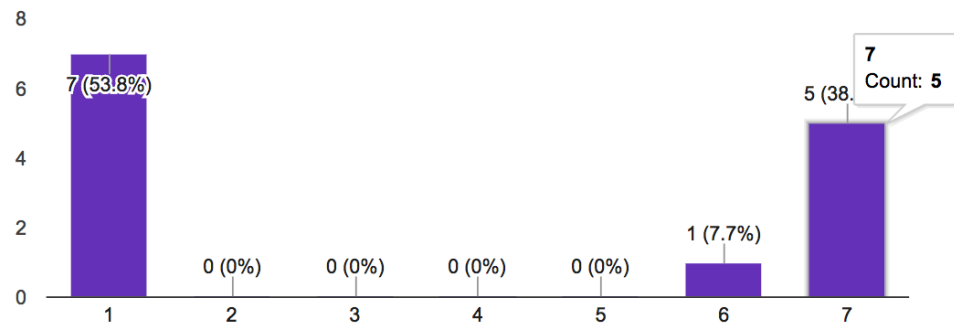
1. How much interaction did you have with the vicar in the week before this sermon?

(14 responses)



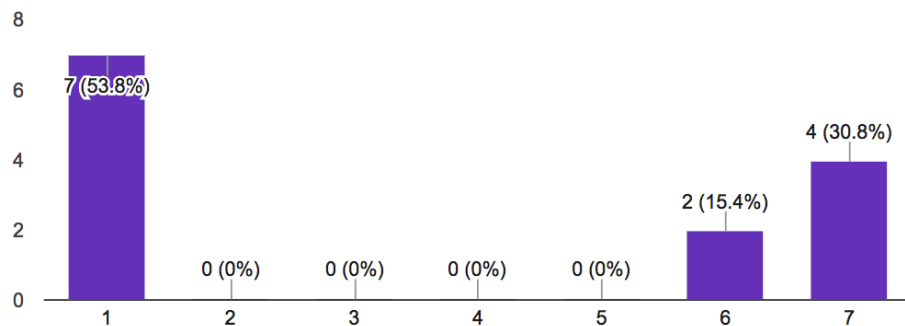
2. Based on your interaction this week how friendly was the vicar toward you?

(13 responses)

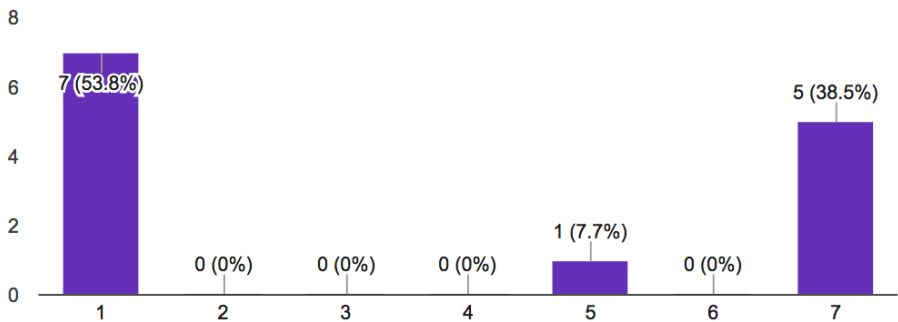


3. Based on your interaction this week how respectful was the vicar toward you?

(13 responses)

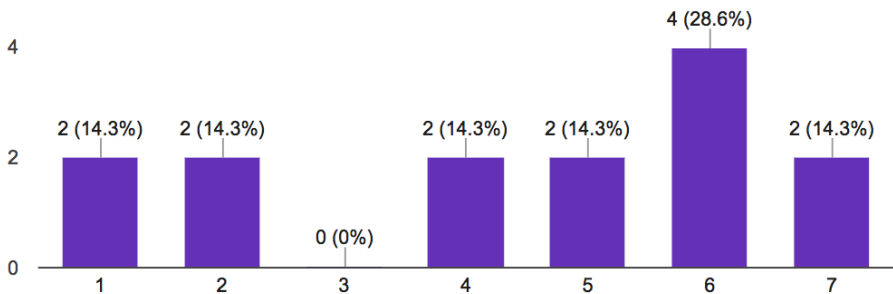


4. Based on your interact this week how open and inviting was the vicar's demeanor toward you?
(13 responses)

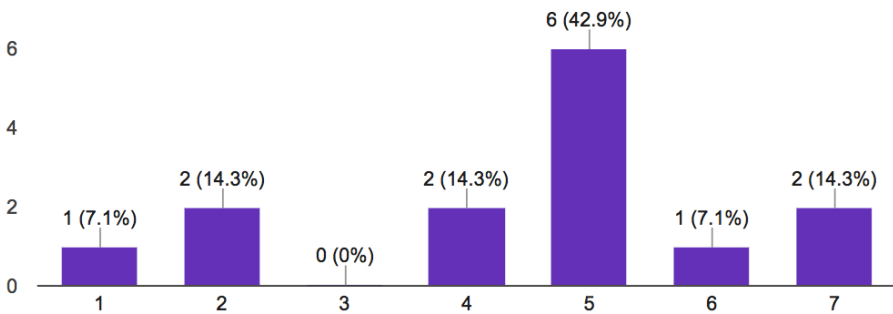


Part 2: Experience with the Vicar During His Sermon

1. The vicar's sermon answered questions I had about the meaning of the text.
(14 responses)

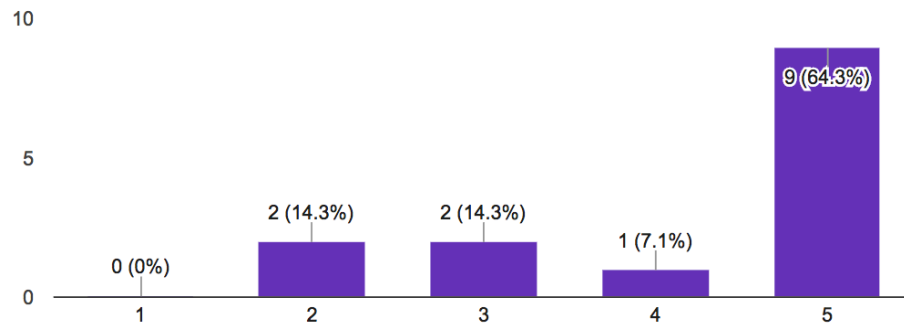


2. The vicar's sermon dealt with struggles I have to understand God and how he works in the world.
(14 responses)



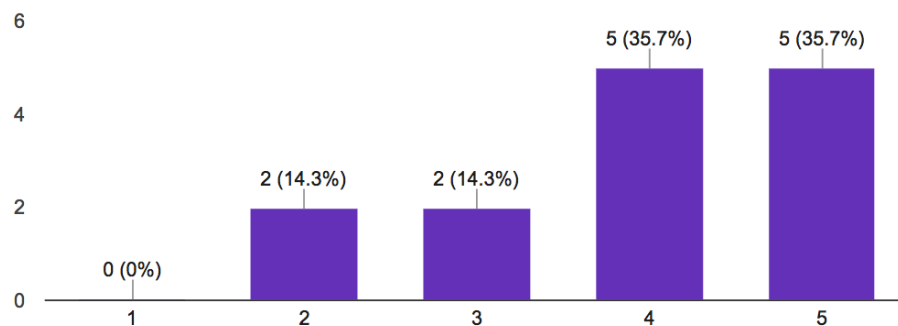
3. The vicar used illustration that I could relate to in my own personal experiences in life.

(14 responses)



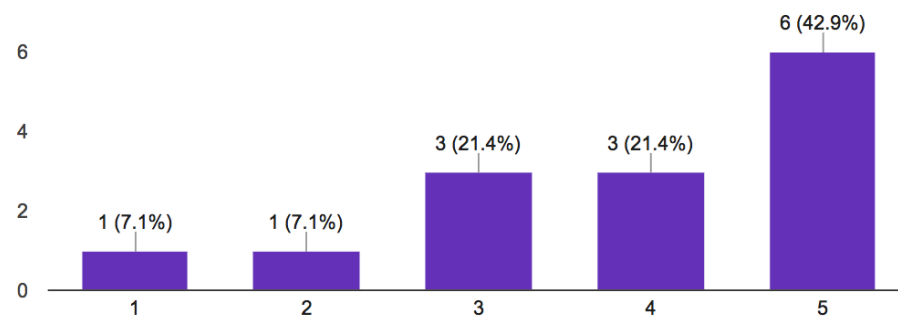
4. The vicar gave examples from real life that helped me see how the text applies to me.

(14 responses)



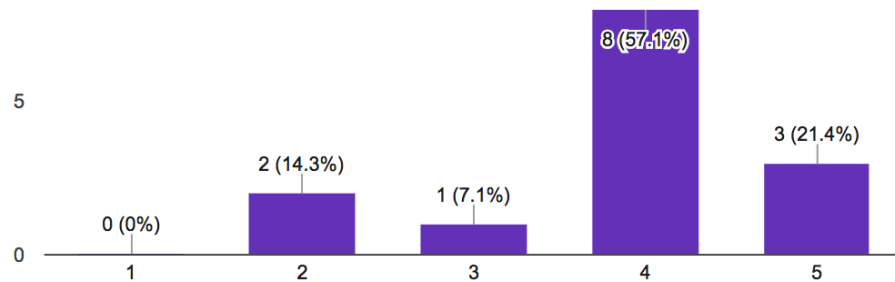
5. The vicar made connections with current events and culture in a way that made me feel like he understands the world I live in.

(14 responses)



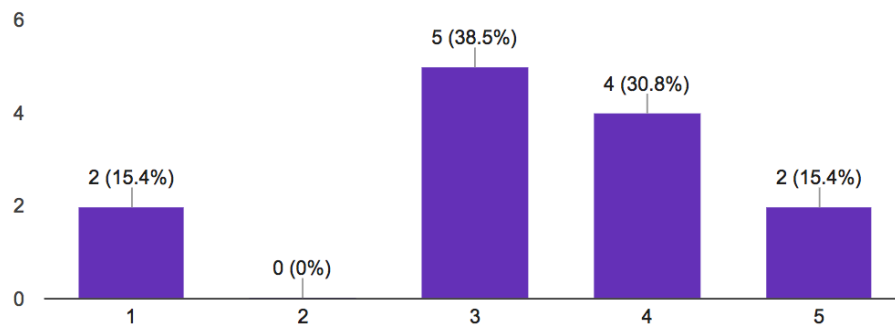
6. The application of the sermon was something I can specifically use in the circumstances of my life.

(14 responses)



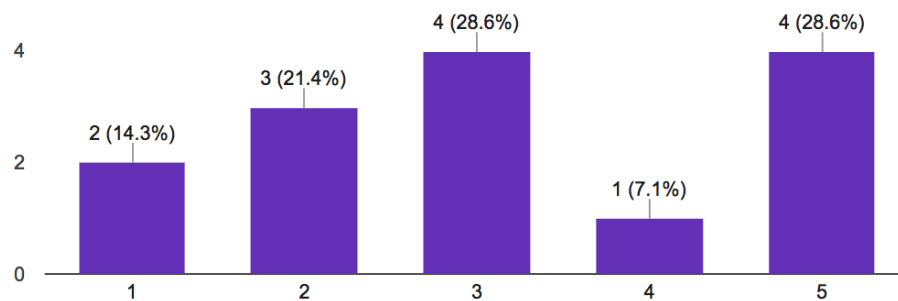
7. The vicar showed me how the text might work in my life by showing me how it works in his life.

(13 responses)

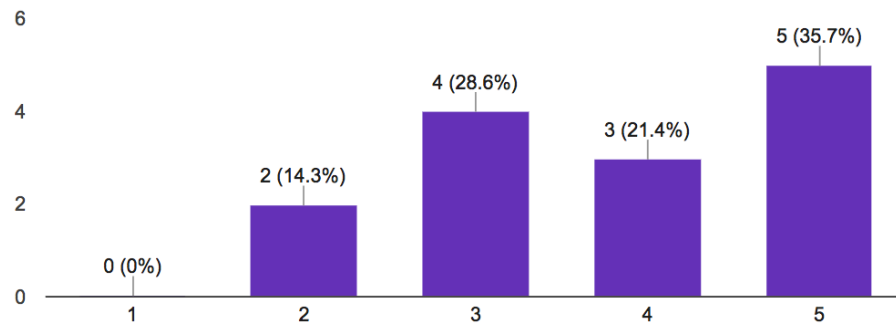


8. At some point in the sermon I felt like the vicar "must have been watching me this past week" because he spoke so clearly to my experience.

(14 responses)

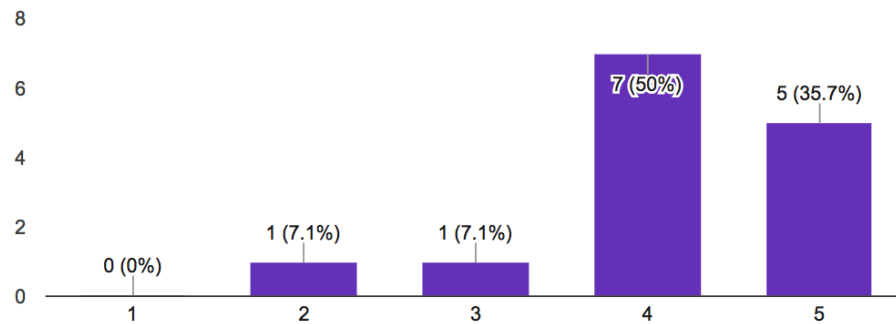


9. The vicar seemed genuinely interested in me as a person. (14 responses)



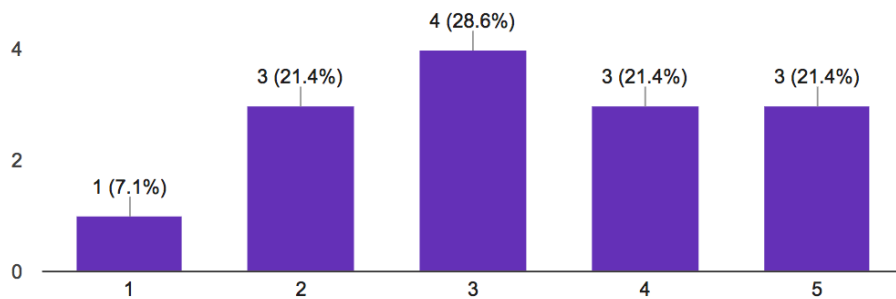
10. The vicar looked at the congregation and seemed interested in their response to what he was saying.

(14 responses)



11. At the end of the sermon I felt like the vicar was talking directly to me and my circumstances.

(14 responses)

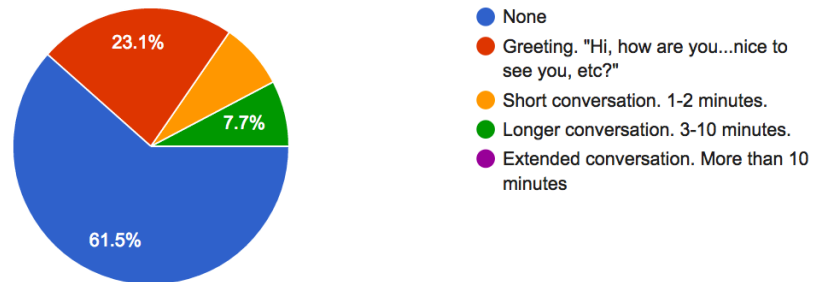


APPENDIX L – VICAR SERMON EVALUATION 3 RESULTS

Part 1: Experience with the Vicar Before He Preached His Sermon

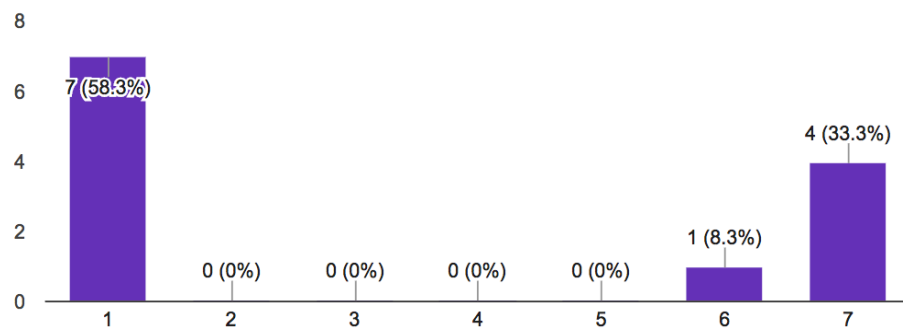
1. How much interaction did you have with the vicar in the week before this sermon?

(13 responses)



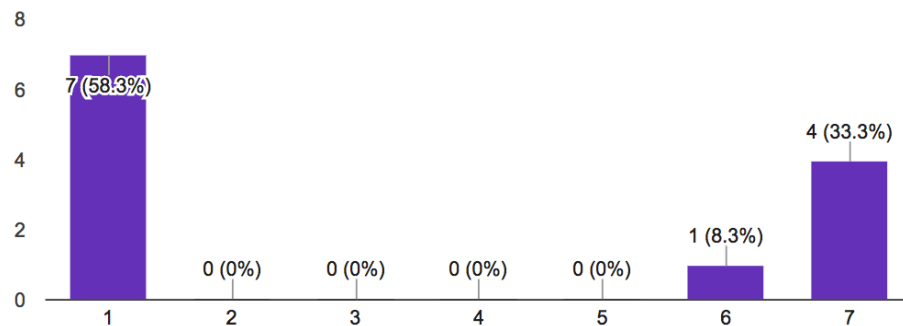
2. Based on your interaction this week how friendly was the vicar toward you?

(12 responses)

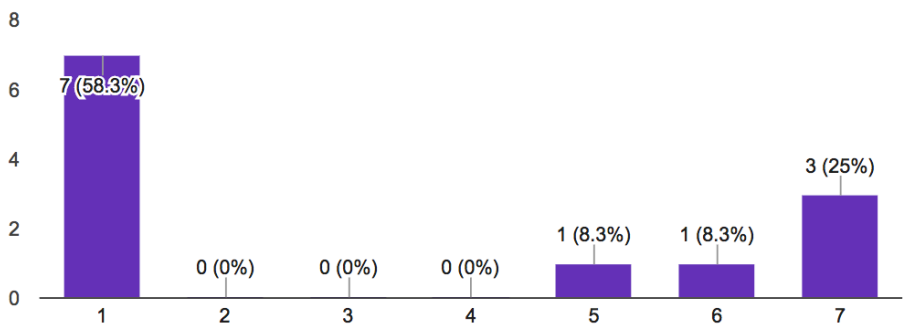


3. Based on your interaction this week how respectful was the vicar toward you?

(12 responses)

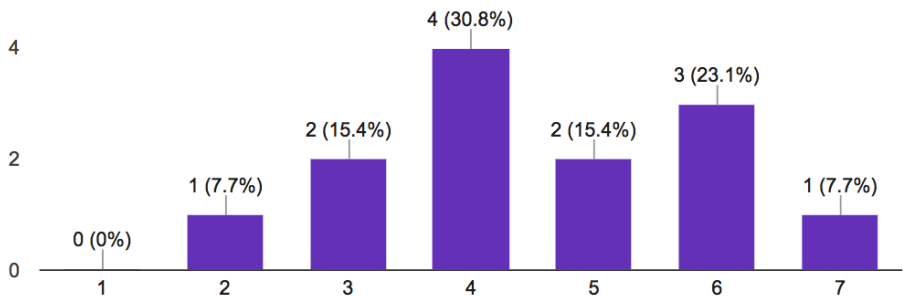


4. Based on your interact this week how open and inviting was the vicar's demeanor toward you?
(12 responses)

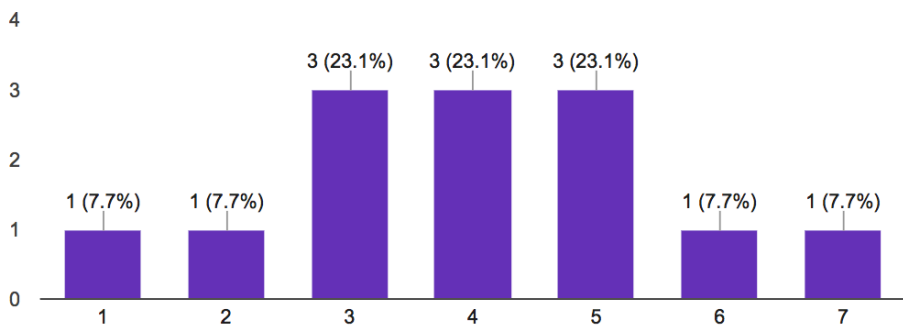


Part 2: Experience with the Vicar During His Sermon

1. The vicar's sermon answered questions I had about the meaning of the text.
(13 responses)

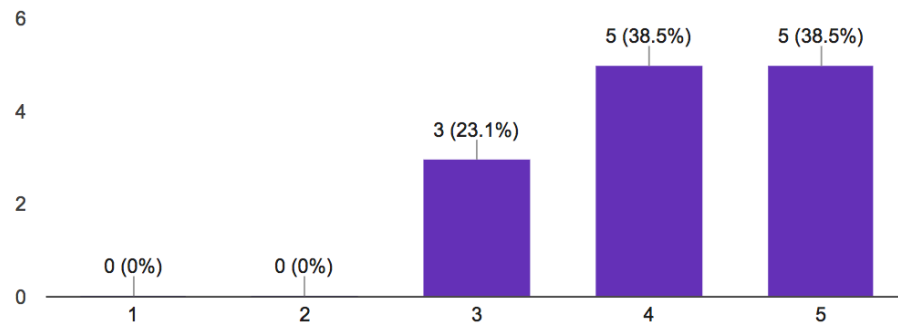


2. The vicar's sermon dealt with struggles I have to understand God and how he works in the world.
(13 responses)



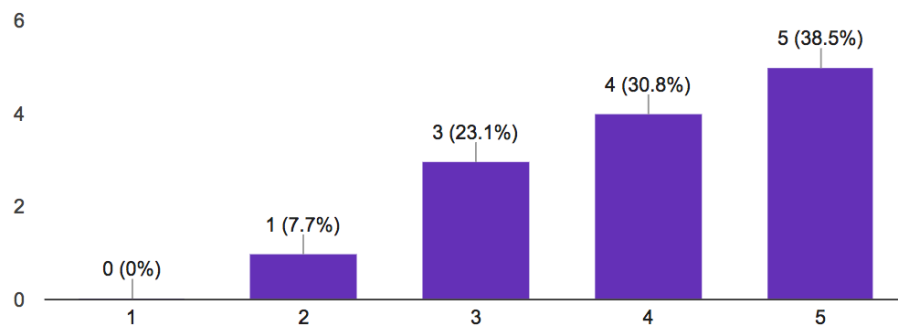
3. The vicar used illustration that I could relate to in my own personal experiences in life.

(13 responses)



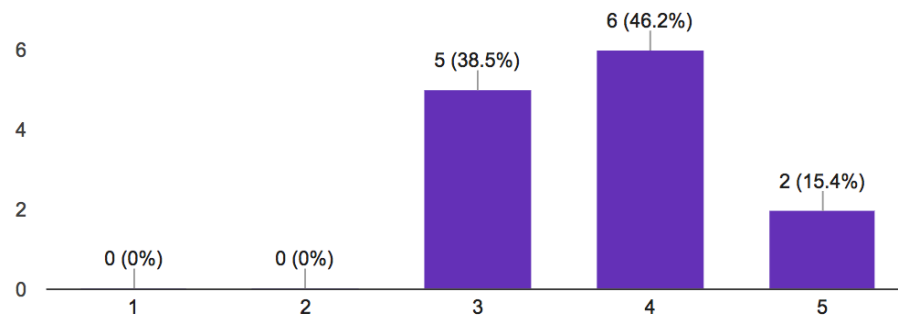
4. The vicar gave examples from real life that helped me see how the text applies to me.

(13 responses)



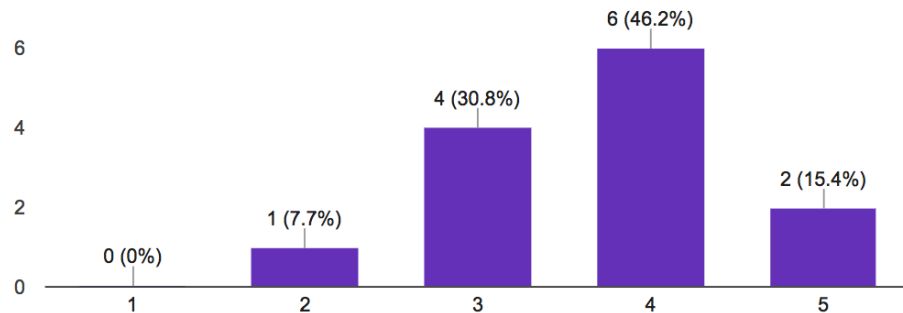
5. The vicar made connections with current events and culture in a way that made me feel like he understands the world I live in.

(13 responses)



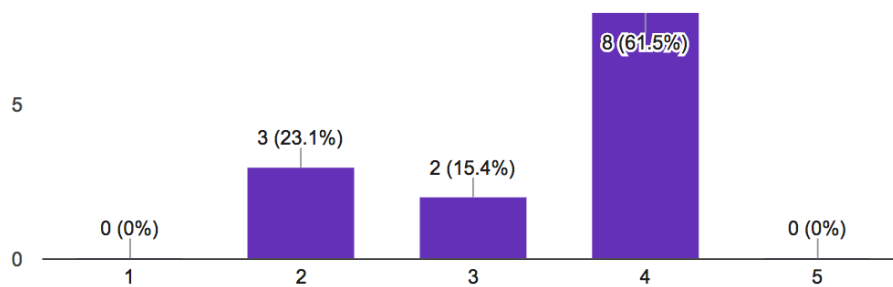
6. The application of the sermon was something I can specifically use in the circumstances of my life.

(13 responses)



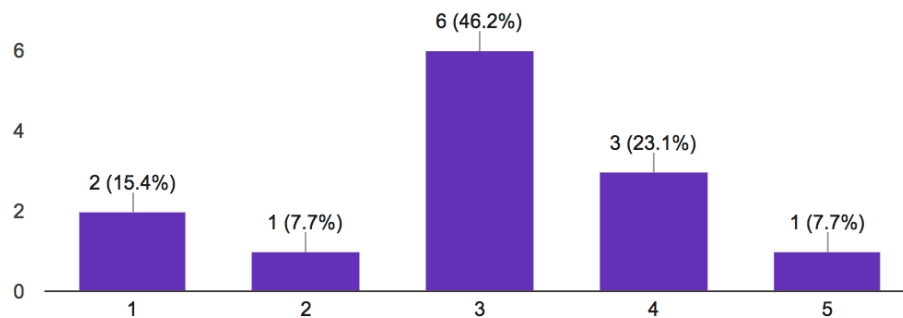
7. The vicar showed me how the text might work in my life by showing me how it works in his life.

(13 responses)

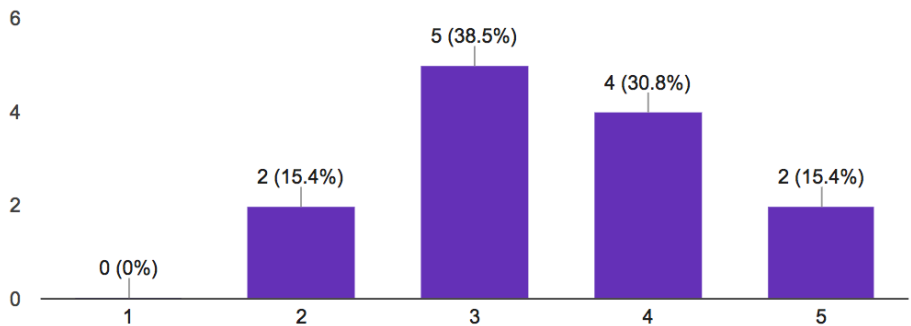


8. At some point in the sermon I felt like the vicar "must have been watching me this past week" because he spoke so clearly to my experience.

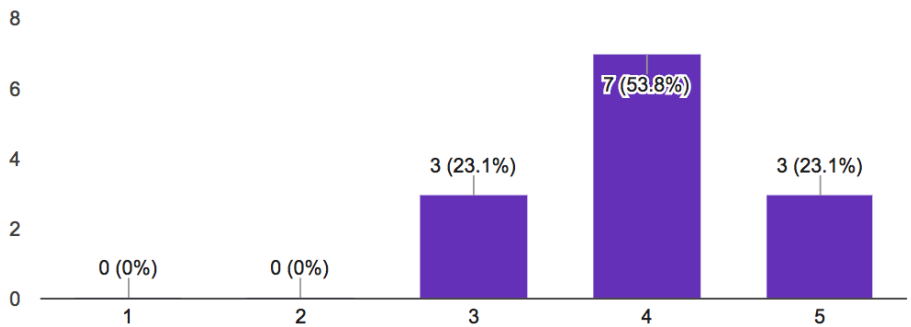
(13 responses)



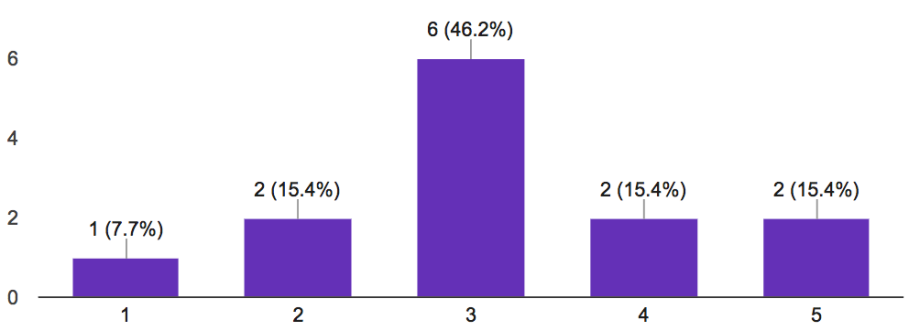
9. The vicar seemed genuinely interested in me as a person. (13 responses)



10. The vicar looked at the congregation and seemed interested in their response to what he was saying. (13 responses)



11. At the end of the sermon I felt like the vicar was talking directly to me and my circumstances. (13 responses)

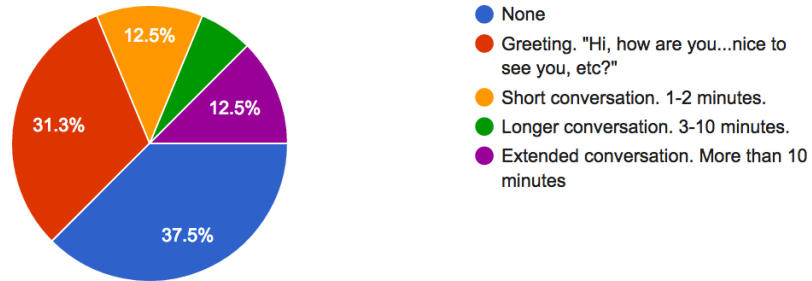


APPENDIX M – VICAR SERMON EVALUATION 4 RESULTS

Part 1: Experience with the Vicar Before He Preached His Sermon

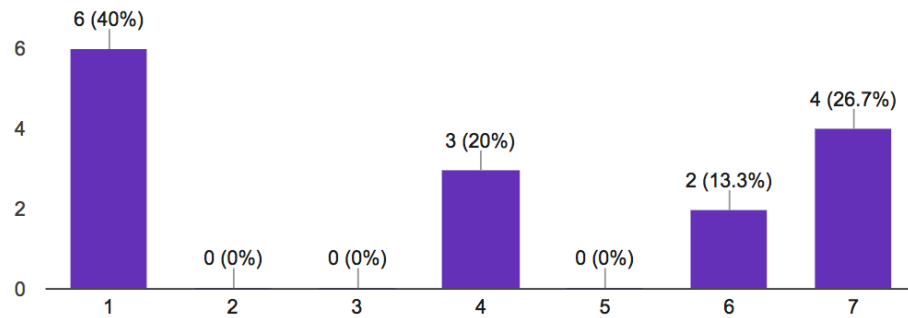
1. How much interaction did you have with the vicar in the week before this sermon?

(16 responses)



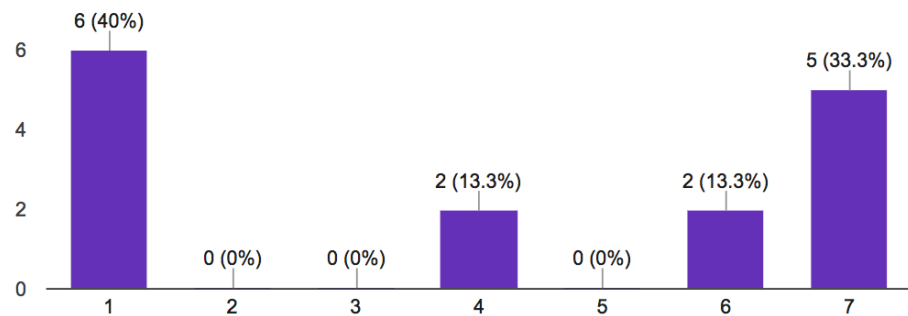
2. Based on your interaction this week how friendly was the vicar toward you?

(15 responses)

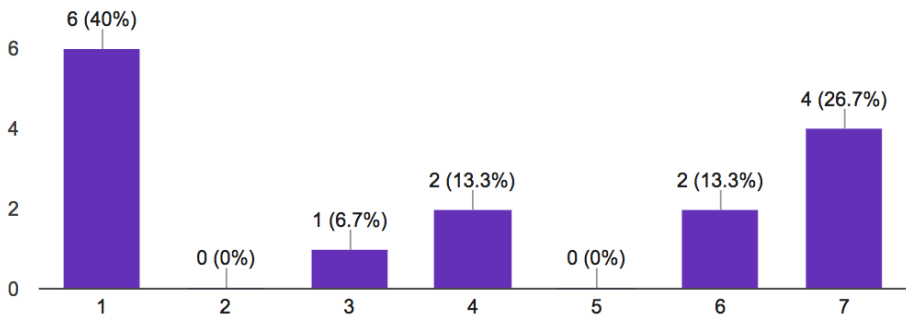


3. Based on your interaction this week how respectful was the vicar toward you?

(15 responses)

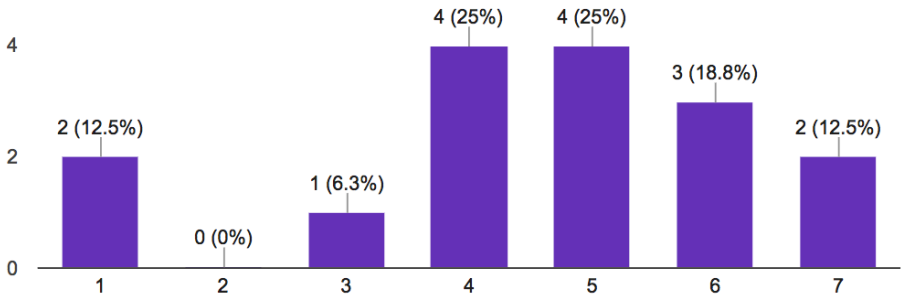


4. Based on your interact this week how open and inviting was the vicar's demeanor toward you?
(15 responses)

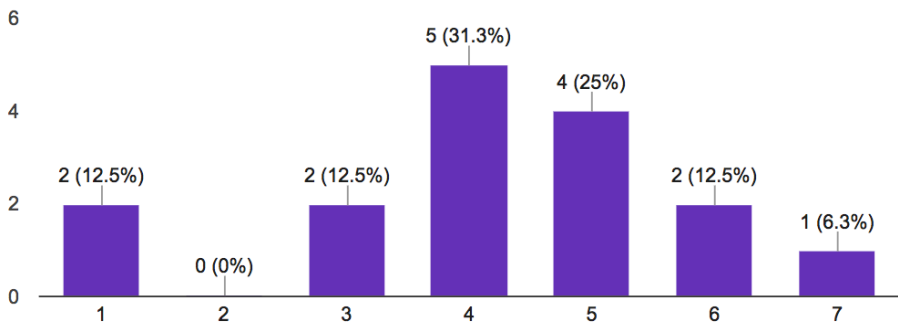


Part 2: Experience with the Vicar During His Sermon

1. The vicar's sermon answered questions I had about the meaning of the text.
(16 responses)

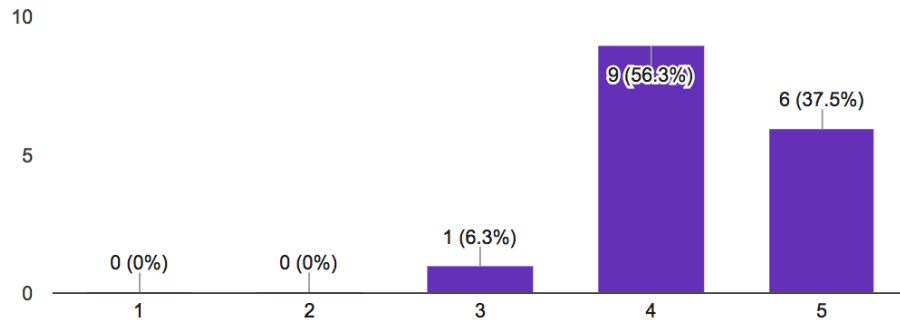


2. The vicar's sermon dealt with struggles I have to understand God and how he works in the world.
(16 responses)



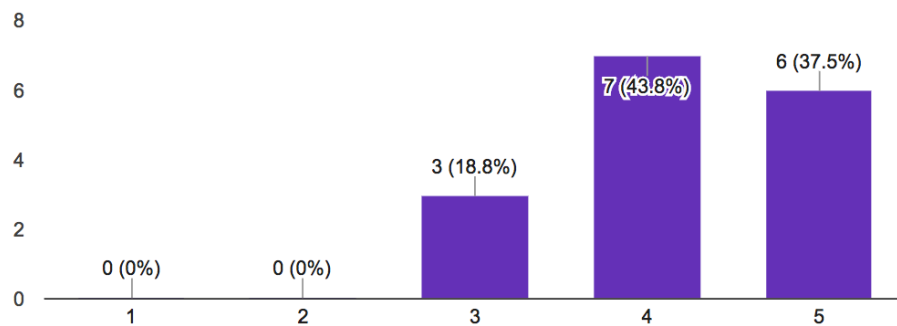
3. The vicar used illustration that I could relate to in my own personal experiences in life.

(16 responses)



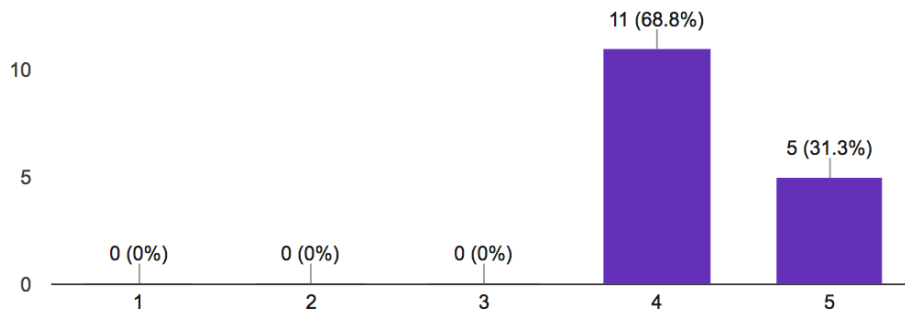
4. The vicar gave examples from real life that helped me see how the text applies to me.

(16 responses)

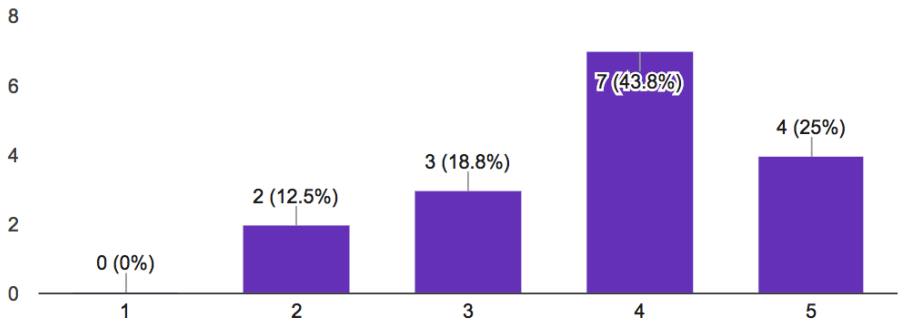


5. The vicar made connections with current events and culture in a way that made me feel like he understands the world I live in.

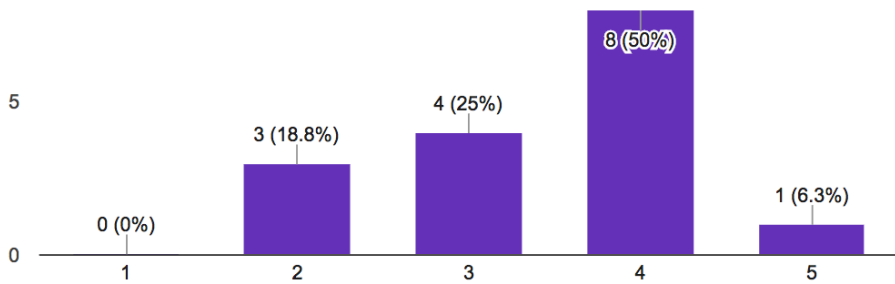
(16 responses)



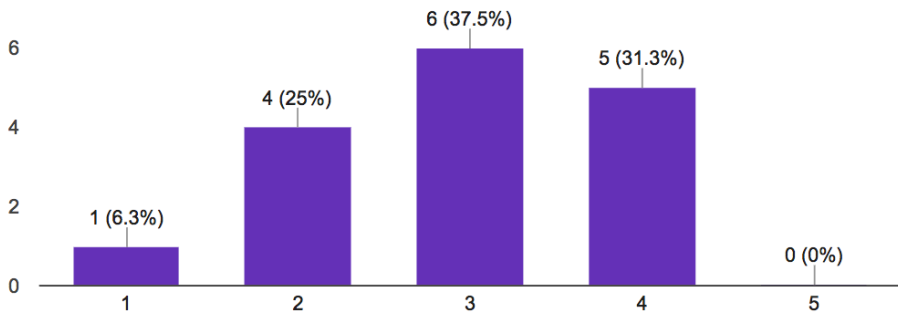
6. The application of the sermon was something I can specifically use in the circumstances of my life.
(16 responses)



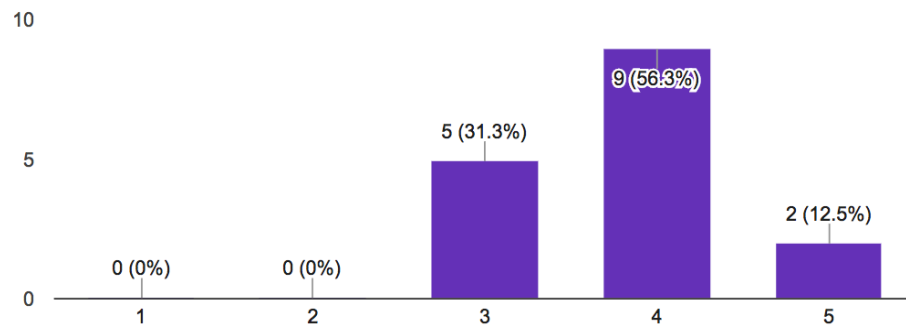
7. The vicar showed me how the text might work in my life by showing me how it works in his life.
(16 responses)



8. At some point in the sermon I felt like the vicar "must have been watching me this past week" because he spoke so clearly to my experience.
(16 responses)

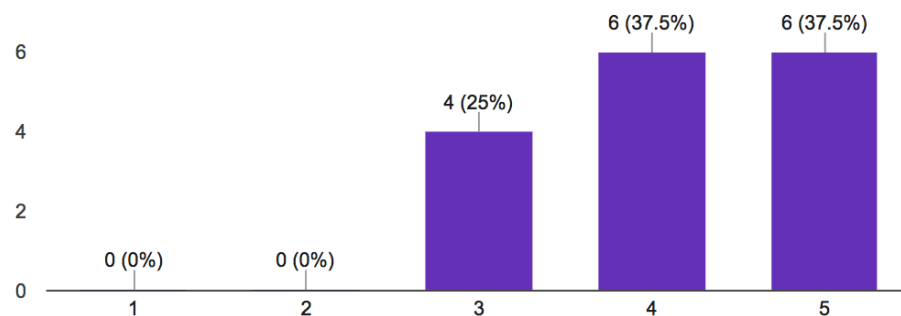


9. The vicar seemed genuinely interested in me as a person. (16 responses)



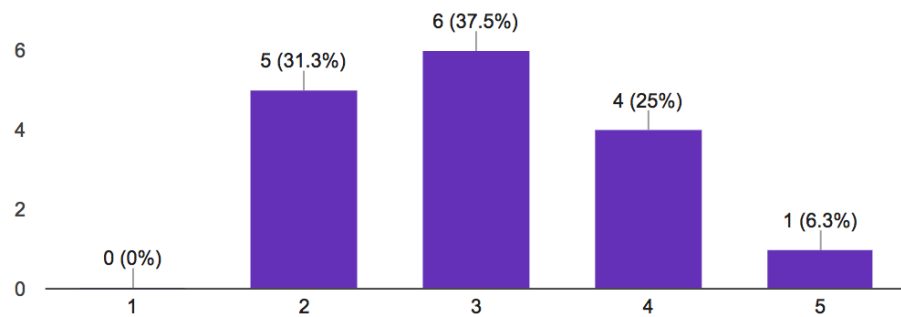
10. The vicar looked at the congregation and seemed interested in their response to what he was saying.

(16 responses)



11. At the end of the sermon I felt like the vicar was talking directly to me and my circumstances.

(16 responses)

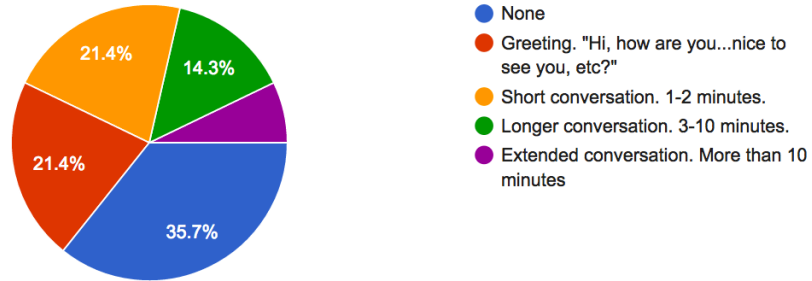


APPENDIX N – VICAR SERMON EVALUATION 5 RESULTS

Part 1: Experience with the Vicar Before He Preached His Sermon

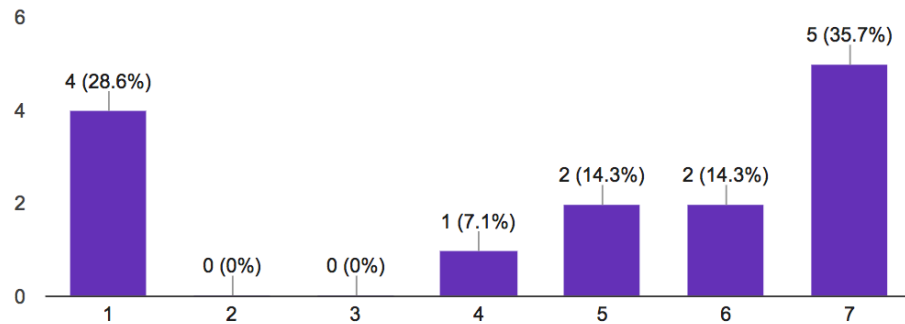
1. How much interaction did you have with the vicar in the week before this sermon?

(14 responses)



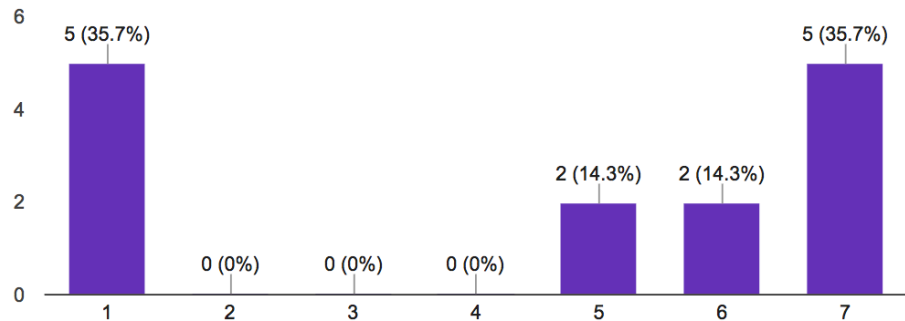
2. Based on your interaction this week how friendly was the vicar toward you?

(14 responses)



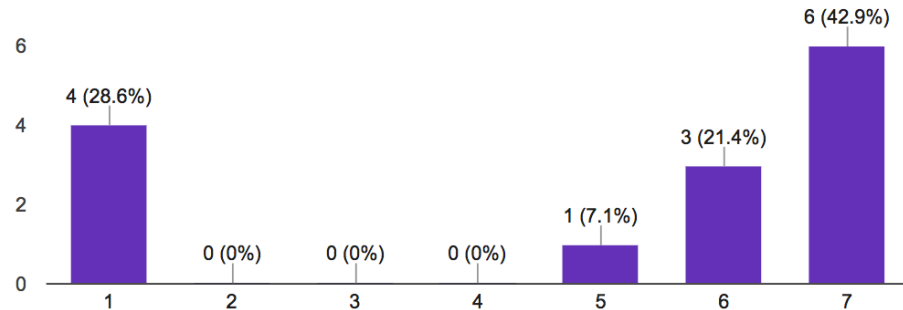
3. Based on your interaction this week how respectful was the vicar toward you?

(14 responses)



4. Based on your interact this week how open and inviting was the vicar's demeanor toward you?

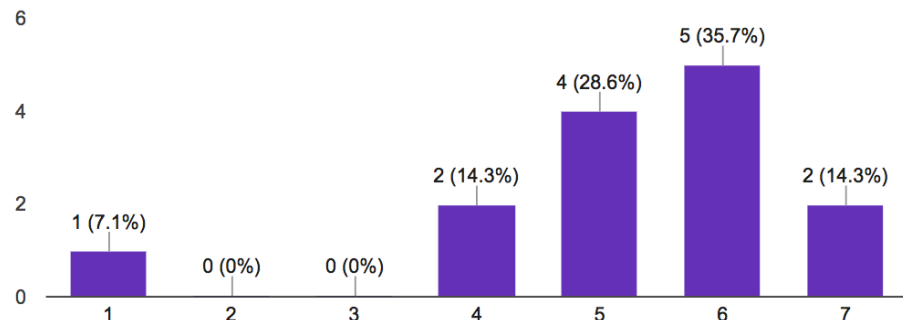
(14 responses)



Part 2: Experience with the Vicar During His Sermon

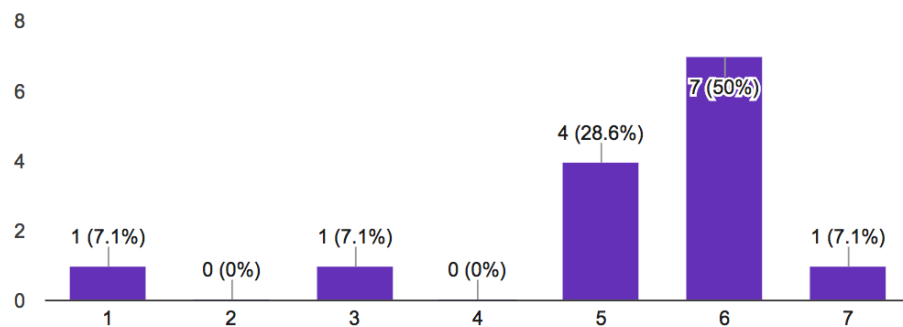
1. The vicar's sermon answered questions I had about the meaning of the text.

(14 responses)



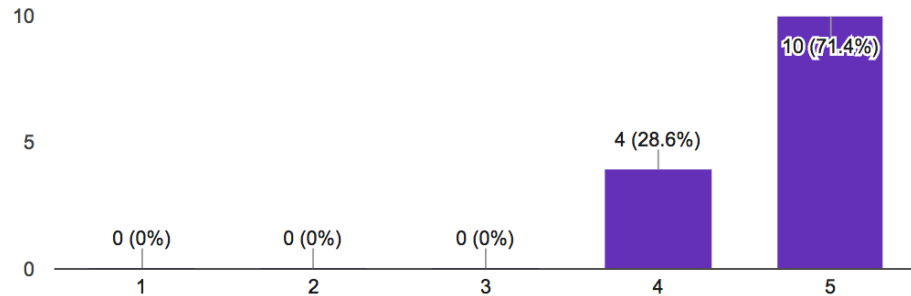
2. The vicar's sermon dealt with struggles I have to understand God and how he works in the world.

(14 responses)



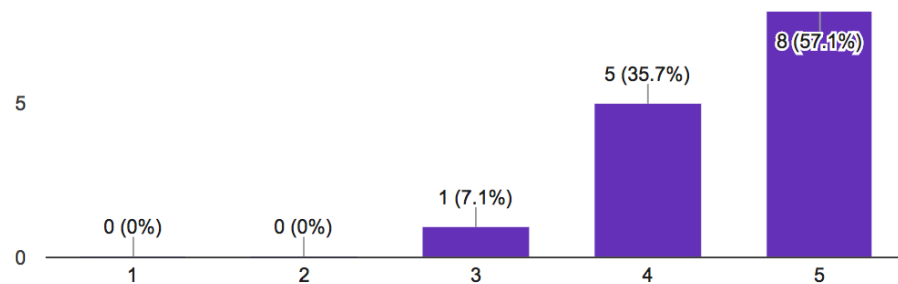
3. The vicar used illustration that I could relate to in my own personal experiences in life.

(14 responses)



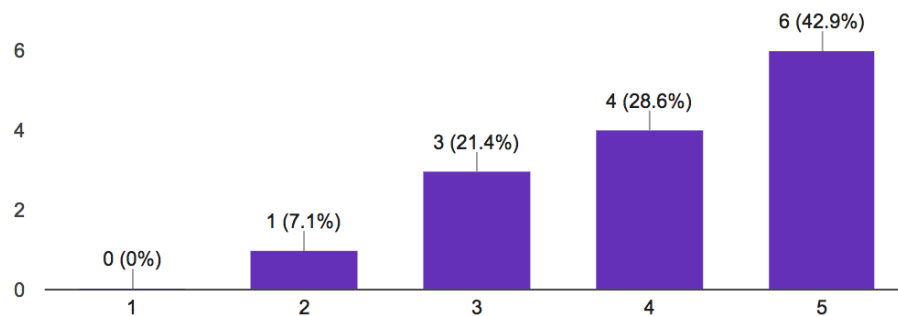
4. The vicar gave examples from real life that helped me see how the text applies to me.

(14 responses)

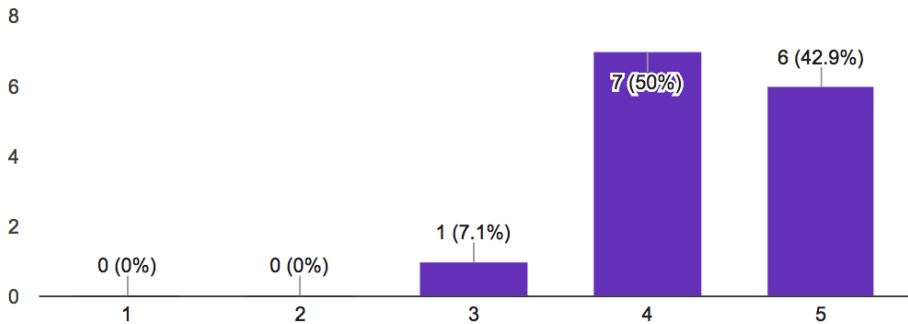


5. The vicar made connections with current events and culture in a way that made me feel like he understands the world I live in.

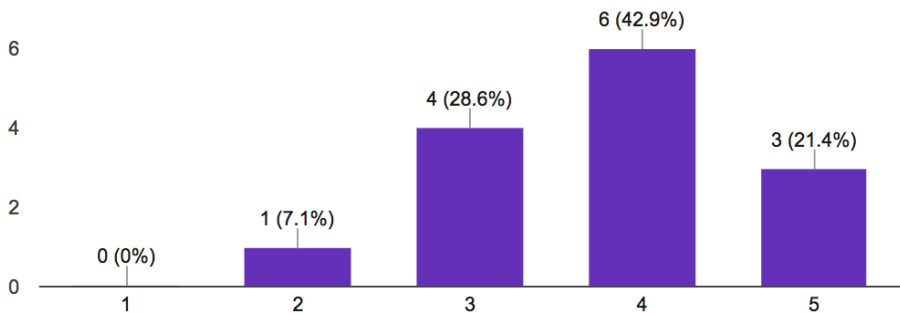
(14 responses)



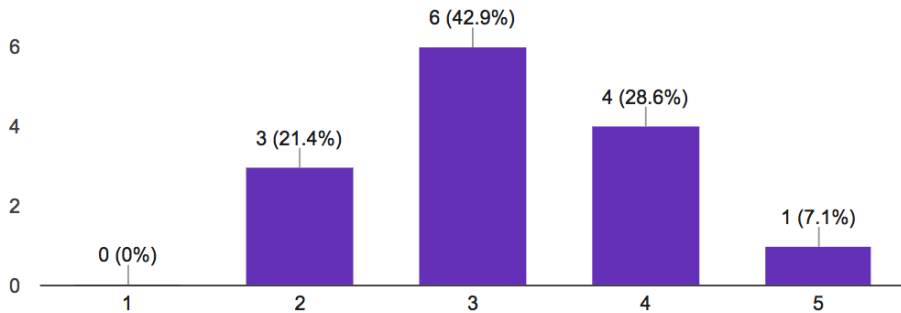
6. The application of the sermon was something I can specifically use in the circumstances of my life.
(14 responses)



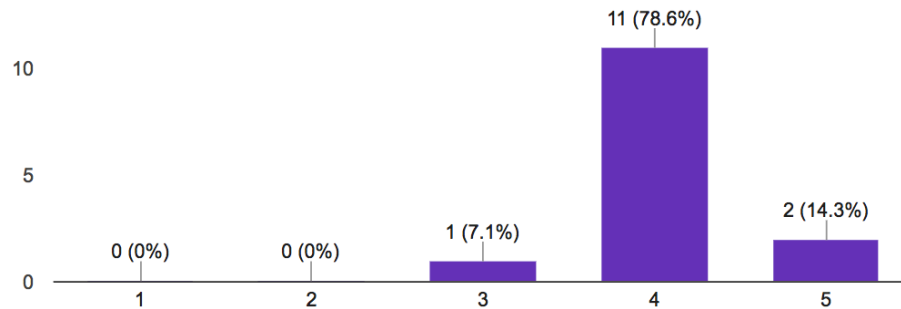
7. The vicar showed me how the text might work in my life by showing me how it works in his life.
(14 responses)



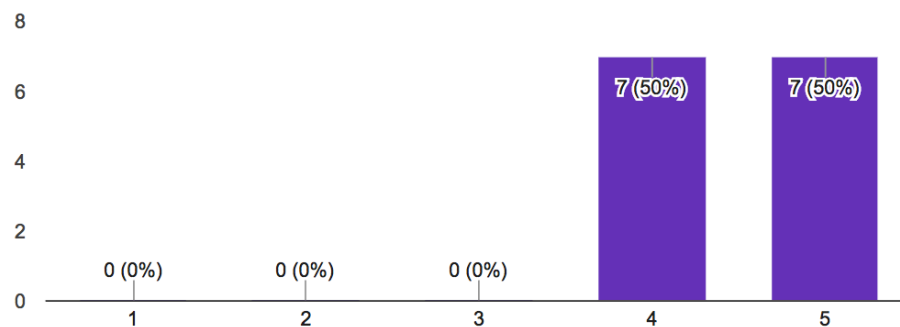
8. At some point in the sermon I felt like the vicar "must have been watching me this past week" because he spoke so clearly to my experience.
(14 responses)



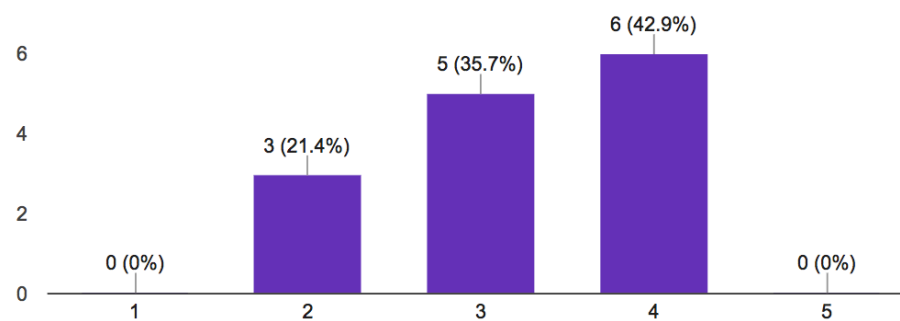
9. The vicar seemed genuinely interested in me as a person. (14 responses)



10. The vicar looked at the congregation and seemed interested in their response to what he was saying.
(14 responses)



11. At the end of the sermon I felt like the vicar was talking directly to me and my circumstances.
(14 responses)

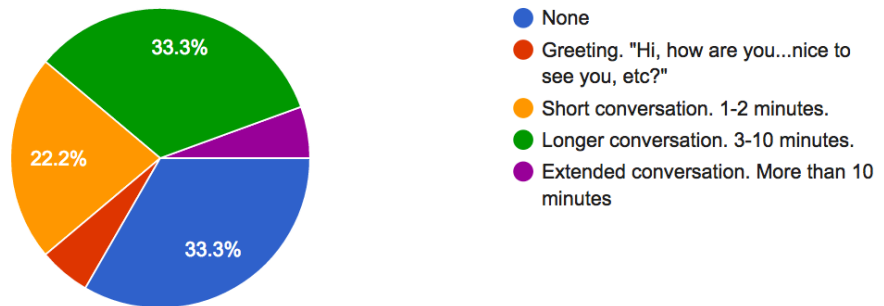


APPENDIX O – VICAR SERMON EVALUATION 6 RESULTS

Experience with the Vicar Before He Preached His Sermon

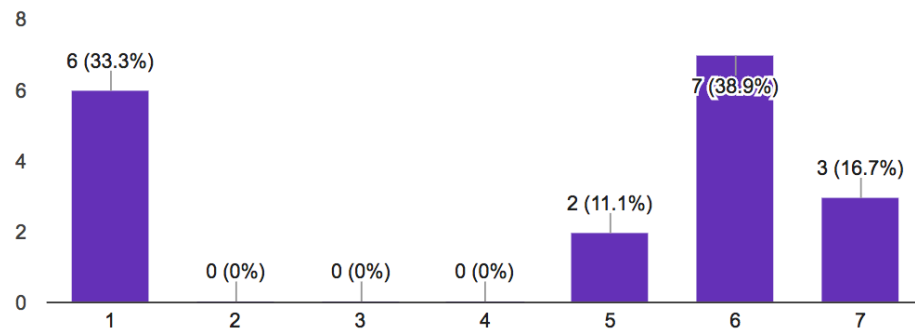
How much interaction did you have with the vicar in the week before this sermon?

(18 responses)



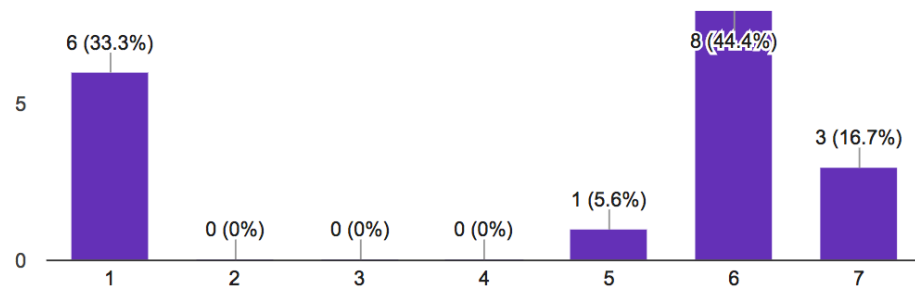
Based on your interaction this week how friendly was the vicar toward you?

(18 responses)



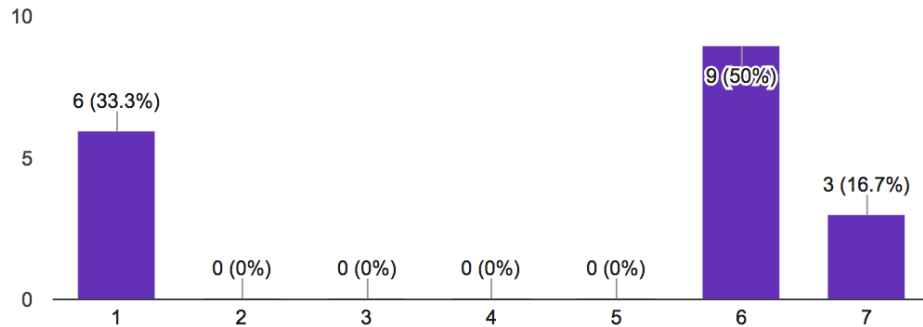
Based on your interaction this week how respectful was the vicar toward you?

(18 responses)



Based on your interact this week how open and inviting was the vicar's demeanor toward you?

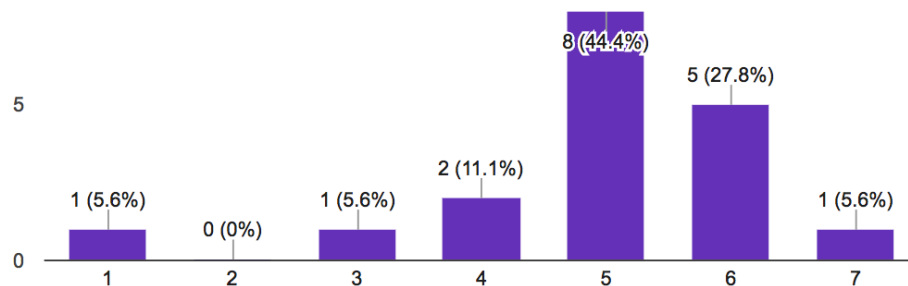
(18 responses)



Experience with the Vicar During His Sermon

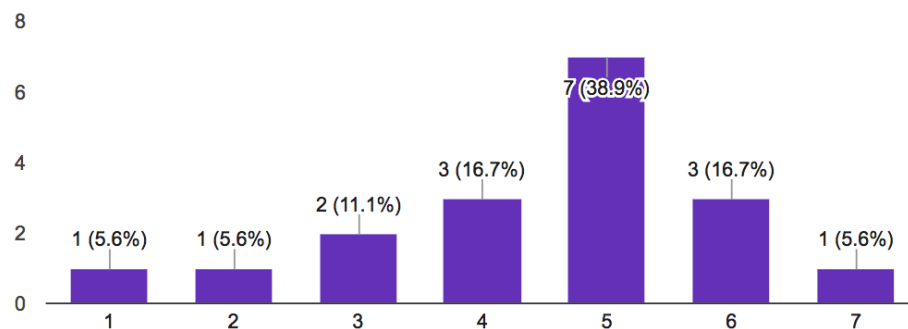
The vicar's sermon answered questions I had about the meaning of the text.

(18 responses)

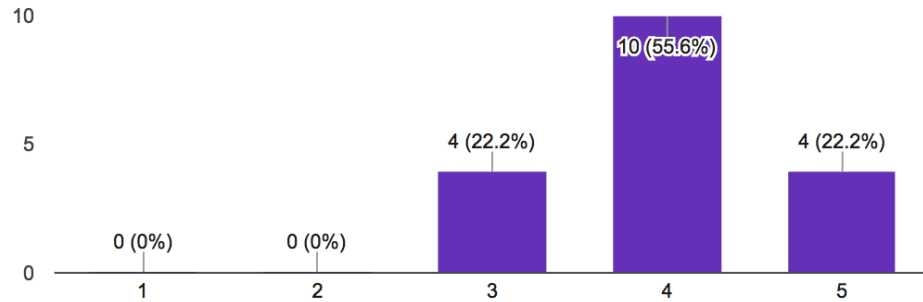


The vicar's sermon dealt with struggles I have to understand God and how he works in the world.

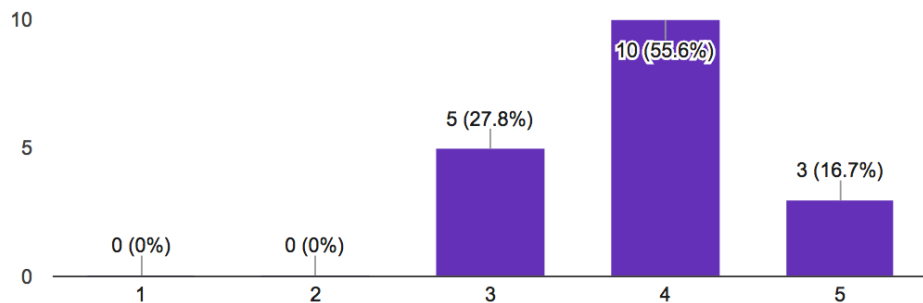
(18 responses)



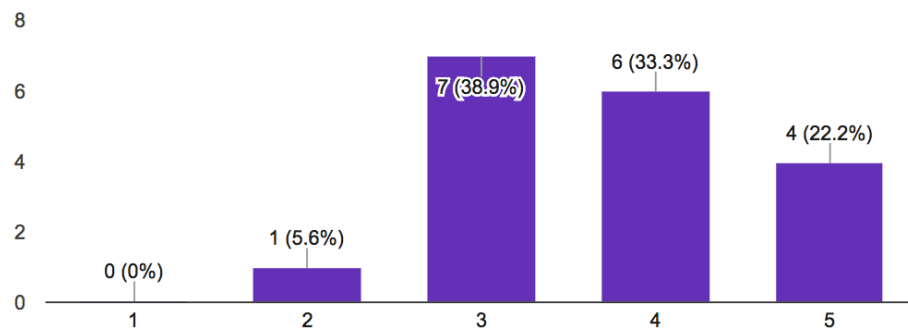
The vicar used illustration that I could relate to in my own personal experiences in life.
(18 responses)



The vicar gave examples from real life that helped me see how the text applies to me.
(18 responses)

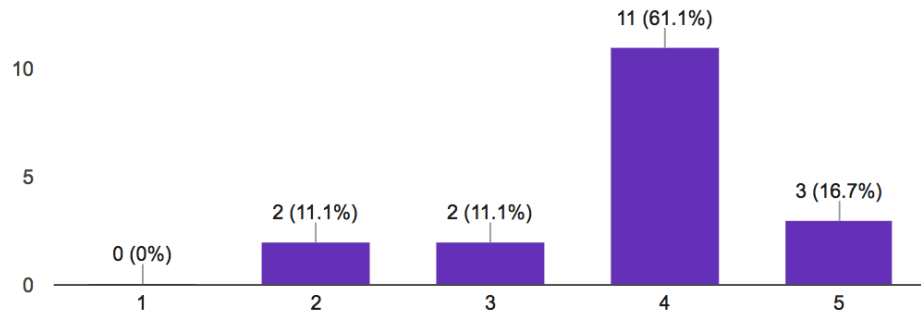


The vicar made connections with current events and culture in a way that made me feel like he understands the world I live in.
(18 responses)



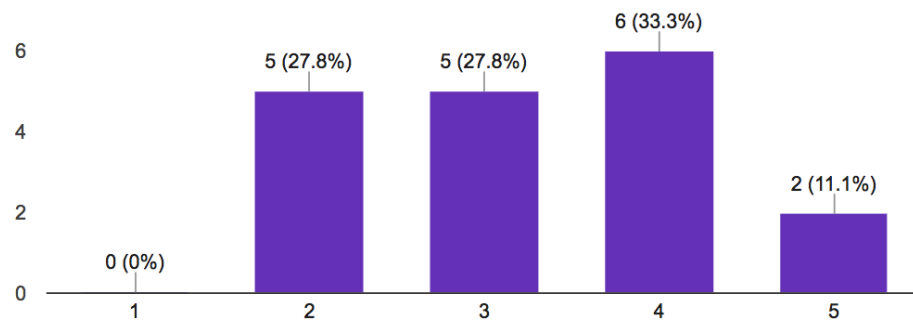
The application of the sermon was something I can specifically use in the circumstances of my life.

(18 responses)



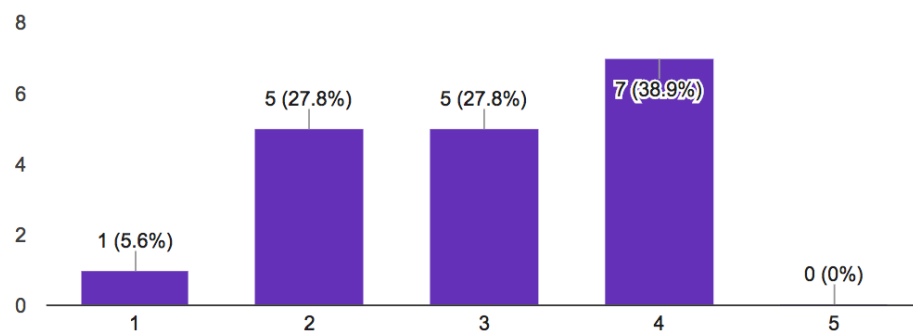
The vicar showed me how the text might work in my life by showing me how it works in his life.

(18 responses)

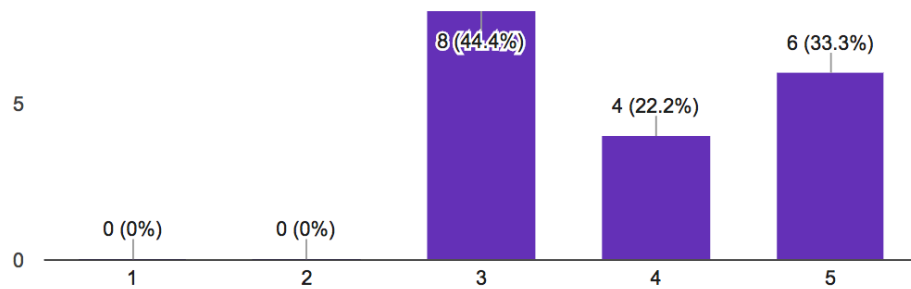


At some point in the sermon I felt like the vicar "must have been watching me this past week" because he spoke so clearly to my experience.

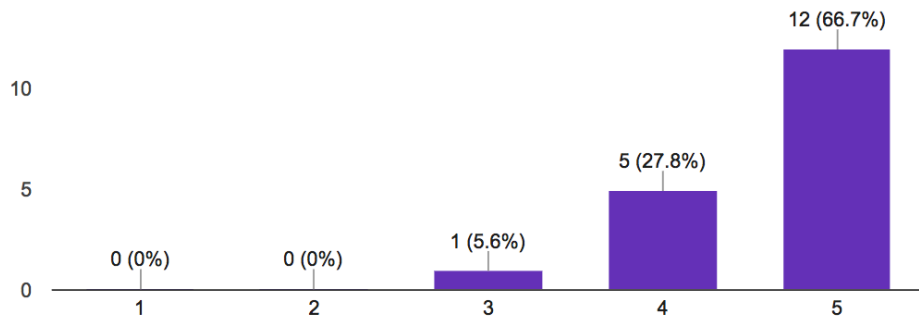
(18 responses)



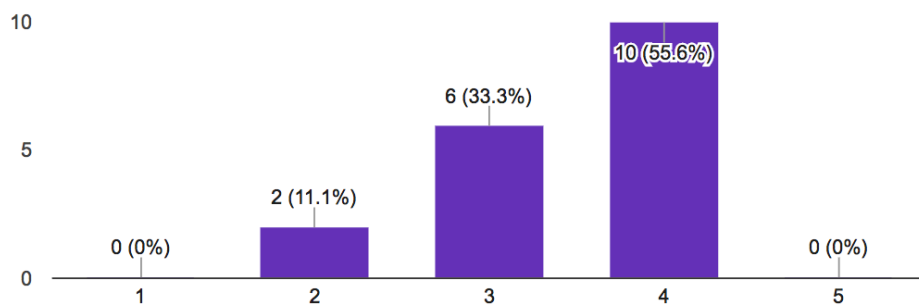
The vicar seemed genuinely interested in me as a person. (18 responses)



The vicar looked at the congregation and seemed interested in their response to what he was saying.
(18 responses)



At the end of the sermon I felt like the vicar was talking directly to me and my circumstances.
(18 responses)



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